Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

'Arafat Sends Message to 'Abd-al-Majid

NC0103131393 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1228 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 1 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid received a message from Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat on the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent Middle East tour.

The message was delivered by Palestinian ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal, who said later that it is up to Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid to decide how to present 'Arafat's message to the Arab countries.

On the Palestinian delegation's participation in the next round of bilateral negotiations, the Palestinian ambassador said: We are waiting to see the results of the recent Egyptian efforts and of President Husni Mubarak's forthcoming visit to Washington in addition to the five-sided meeting of the Arab cordon states in Damascus.

He stressed the need to link Israel's complete halt to the policy of deportation to the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs

'Ashrawi on Conditions for Talks Participation

TA0103172793 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in Arabic 1 Mar 93 pp 1, 11

[Excerpts] Ramallah, QUDS PRESS—Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokesman of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, has said that the six points forwarded by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Israel during his regional tour were basically Palestinian points. In an exclusive statement to QUDS PRESS, 'Ashrawi said that the time has come to clarify the matter. Those points are not U.S. proposals but Palestinian demands and they have been announced.

'Ashrawi added that in the meetings with Secretary Christopher, the U.S. side informed us that all those points might be accepted. 'Ashrawi stressed that what is required now is acceptance of all those points, whereby the Israelis would agree on four points and the Americans on two. [passage omitted]

Regarding yesterday morning's Israeli media reports on the Palestinian side's possible participation in the April round of negotiations, 'Ashrawi said: We informed the U.S. side that if there is full commitment to those points, the Palestinian leadership will consider participation in the talks. This hinges on our receiving a final agreement on those points per se. 'Ashrawi added: The U.S. side confirmed those points in writing and is committed to them.

'Abd-al-Shafi Affirms Stance on Peace Talks

TA0103191693 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 1 Mar 93 p 3

[Text] Gaza—In an exclusive statement to AL-MANAR on continuing the negotiating process and the deportee issue, Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation, said: Our stance on the issue of the deportees is firm. We shall not go back to the negotiating table as long as their problem is not resolved. 'Abd-al-Shafi added that the new U.S. Administration is interested in resuming negotiations. Secretary Christopher exerted efforts to persuade the Palestinian side to participate in those negotiations.

'Abd-al-Shafi said: We have no objection to this participation. We participated from the beginning in the peace process with sincerity and in good faith, but the Israeli behavior has hindered continuing this process. Moreover, the deportation decision was a flagrant violation of one of the basic human rights principles and the process of building peace. Therefore, the Palestinian people refuse to return to the negotiations as long as Israel does not implement Resolution 799 on the repatriation of the deportees. 'Abd-al-Shafi added: We will explain to the Arab side our position and adherence to it. If the Arab side shows understanding and shares our position, that will be fine. If, however, it has other convictions and wishes to resume the negotiations, we will not object to that and this will cause no rift between us and the Arab world. I do not exclude the possibility that disagreements might break out, but if they do we will not construe that negatively. Their going to the negotiating table, however, will not force us to do so.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Shafi denied that there was a contradiction between the position of the Palestinian negotiating side and that of the Palestinian leadership.

'Arafat Aide: Talks Delegation To Be Reorganized

TA0103180093 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 1 Mar 93 p 3

[Text] In a statement to AL-MANAR, Nabil Sha'th, one of Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat's advisers, has said that there has been great progress in the political efforts aimed at establishing peace in the region. Sha'th added that the U.S. Administration is playing a positive and serious role for the success of the peace process.

Yasir 'Arafat's adviser disclosed that the Palestinian negotiating delegation will be reorganized shortly to include Palestinians from Jerusalem and the diaspora. Sha'th stressed that Palestinian mediation to clear the climate in the Arab arena is continuing successfully.

PLO Leaders To Meet With Delegates 'Next Week'

JN0103194993 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Informed sources have said that the Palestinian leadership will meet with a number of Palestinian delegation members in Tunis next week in order to define a position on the peace talks in the light of the U.S. secretary of state's tour in the region.

The meeting will be attended by PLO Executive Committee members and representatives of PLO factions.

'Arafat Calls For Convening of Jerusalem Committee

LD0103203493 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the state of Palestine and head of the PLO Executive Committee, today sent an important message to his brother King Hassan II, king of Morocco and chairman of the Jerusalem Committee. The message concerned current developments following Christopher's tour of the region, the serious U.S. retraction on the subject of holy Jerusalem and the attempt to overlook it at the peace negotiations, Israel's lack of commitment in complying with Resolution 799 and the illegality of the deportations, and the Israeli violations of Palestinians' human rights.

In his message, Brother Abu-'Ammar warned against the dangers emerging from these retractions due to the special status which Jerusalem represents in the hearts of the Arab and Islamic nation and our Palestinian people and all those who love truth and justice. Brother Abu-'Ammar stressed anew the commitment to the idea that holy Jerusalem is capital of our Palestinian state, the first of the two Qiblas, the third of the two holy places, the place of ascension of the prophet—the prayers and blessings of God be upon him—and the cradle of Christ, blessings be upon him.

Brother Abu-'Ammar asked King Hassan II to call on the Jerusalem Committee to convene as soon as possible.

Trends Emerge at PLO Meeting; 10 Factions Meet

JN0203095693 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Mar 93 p 22

[By 'Awdah 'Awdah]

[Text] The "10 Palestinian factions" opposing the resumption of the peace process opened meetings in Damascus yesterday. The factions are: The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, the Palestine Liberation Front, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, Fatah-the Uprising, the Popular Liberation War Vanguards-al-Sa'iqah, the Palestinian Revolutionary Communist Party, the Hamas Movement, and the Islamic Jihad Movement, led by Fathi al-Shaqaqi.

Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for the Hamas Movement, told AL-RA'Y that the movement's delegation left Amman on 28 February for this purpose.

Palestinian officials in touch with the Tunisian capital to follow the meetings of the PLO Executive Committee have also told AL-RA'Y that the meetings which ended at dawn yesterday were dominated by three trends.

The first thinks that Palestinian participation in the Washington negotiations in April is unavoidable because all countries are going to the talks and because the negotiations are aimed at returning the deportees and resolving other questions, such as implementing Resolution 242 with regard to the occupied territories and linking the transitional phase and the final phase, taking advantage of the U.S. desire to play a full-partner role in the negotiations.

The second trend views the U.S. attitude toward Resolution 799 as an indication of the U.S. Administration's understanding of peace in the region, which harmonizes with the Israeli understanding, by applying the principle of peace in return for a part of the occupied territories; that is, peace without Jerusalem and parts of the Golan and the West Bank.

This trend also stresses the need not to resume the negotiations unless all the deportees are returned and unless Israel and the United States declare together their commitment to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis of a settlement in the transitional and final phases. Moreover, this trend thinks it necessary to approach Western countries and Europe to rally support for this stand and explain the serious consequences of separating the resumption of the negotiations and resolving the question of the deportees.

A third trend thinks that the negotiations are useless because the balance of war is not in favor of any good results. This trend demands withdrawing from the negotiations and changing Palestinian representation.

PLO Condemns Israel for Sealing Gaza Strip

LD0203141593 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] In its first reaction to the Israeli criminal measure to seal off Gaza Strip, the PLO issued a statement in Tunis this morning in which it said that the decision of Rabin's government to seal off the Gaza Strip is a big crime and a new method that falls within the methods of mass punishment against the Palestinian people. The statement stressed the serious danger of this measure which represents a link in a chain of plans of terrorism

and mass punishment as laid down by Rabin's government to kill and wound thousands of children and women, and destroy safe houses by aircraft missiles. [as heard]

The PLO considered this new Israeli crime as another obstacle on the path of the peace process. It stressed that it will call on all appropriate international and Arab bodies to undertake urgent measures to halt the continuous Israel terrorist practices and collective punishment against the sons of the Palestinian people.

Al-Husayni Condemns Tel Aviv Terrorist Attack

TA0203053593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Palestinian leader Faysal al-Husayni has condemned yesterday's attack. In an interview with Qol Yisra'el, al-Husayni said he denounces the murder of Jews in Tel Aviv just as he denounces the killing of an Arab boy in Gaza.

Members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks yesterday toured Jewish settlements in the Ramallah and Janin areas. Al-Husayni, who heads the team, said the Palestinians cannot decide on whether to attend the next round of peace talks until they receive clarifications from Israel on two issues: their demand that no further deportations are carried out and the return of the deportees now in south Lebanon.

'Abd-al-Shafi Condemns Attack

TA0203090793 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 2 Mar 93 p A3

[Report by Gid'on Alon and Yosi Torpstein]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks expressed sorrow over yesterday's terrorist attack in Tel Aviv and even condemned it. Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation, said: "The incident in Tel Aviv is a recurrence of similar events in the past. We regret it and condemn the killing, but obviously such incidents will recur in the future as long as Israel's occupation of the territories and Palestinian resistance to Israel's oppression continue. This vicious circle must be broken. I hope this incident will propel us all to the negotiating table."

Official on Hamas U.S. Terrorist List Inclusion

PM0203104193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Feb 93 p 3

['Ali Salih report: "Hamas Rejects its Inclusion in Terrorism List, on Grounds That its Operations Are Military and Did Not Harm U.S. Interests"]

[Text] London—A senior source from Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has accused the United States of using double standards and selectivity in its positions. The sources' accusation came in response to the U.S. State Department's inclusion of Hamas in the terrorist organizations list published yesterday.

As is known, the U.S. State Department publishes a list of terrorist organizations annually. It included Hamas in its 1993 list for the first time. It is believed that Israel and its pressure groups in the United States played a major role in this connection in the wake of the military operations carried out by the al-Qassam battalions belonging to Hamas in the occupied territories, especially the abduction and murder of Israeli sergeant Nessim Toledano last December—the operation which led to the deportation of 415 Palestinians to southern Lebanon.

Commenting on the decision, Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in the Jordanian capital, Amman, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "By doing this the new U.S. Administration confirms that it is moving in the same direction which previous administrations followed in their handling of the peoples' issues, as double standards and selectivity were the previous U.S. Administrations' most marked characteristics."

Nazzal added that "we find no logic in Hamas' inclusion in the terrorism list. This is because nothing has been recorded against the movement that it carried operations outside the occupied territories. Besides, the U.S. law—as we understand it—lists only organizations and quarters which carry out operations against U.S. interests or U.S. citizens—something which Hamas did not do, whether inside or outside the occupied territories."

He went on to say: "At any rate, Hamas is a national liberation movement and operates within the framework of the UN Charter, which guarantees for occupied peoples the right to resist the occupation. And it will pay no attention to any other classifications, whatever their source."

Asked whether that decision will have an impact on Hamas and its supporters, especially in the United States, Nazzal said, "Hamas' supporters are spread in huge numbers outside Palestine. They are not spread in one state only. And that will not affect their support for us."

On what happened at the meetings which Hamas representatives held with officials of Western embassies in Amman, Hamas' representative emphasized that his movement held this month, February, "separate meetings with the British, German, and Italian ambassadors in Jordan, the most recent of which was the meeting with the German ambassador."

He also said that "meetings were held with the political counselor at the U.S. Embassy, Eric Guadiosi, in December in the wake of the Israeli decision to deport 415 Palestinians." However, he added that "the meeting which was supposed to be held with the U.S. ambassador this month faltered as a result of Hamas' insistence on contacting the ambassador himself, not anyone else."

In London yesterday the British Foreign office confirmed that its ambassador in Amman held a meeting with Hamas representatives. It said that this meeting had been preceded by other meetings between its diplomats and Hamas representatives in the occupied territories. The Foreign Office denied that the meeting, which was held at Hamas' request, had any political significance.

Hamas Contacts Embassies To Urge Deportees' Return

NC2702103093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0803 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Amman, 27 Feb (MENA)—Ibrahim Ghawshah, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] movement's official spokesman, told MENA that Hamas leaders have discussed the deportees issue with the British, German, and Italian ambassadors in Amman and with some high-level officials at the U.S. Embassy but not, so far, with the U.S. ambassador.

He said Hamas is also contacting the Japanese, Chinese, Canadian, and Russian Embassies in Amman to arrange for meetings with their ambassadors.

The Hamas spokesman explained that the meetings are designed to ask these countries to help implement the UN Security Council resolution providing for the Palestinian deportees' return to their homeland and to clarify Hamas' character and goals as a national liberation movement. He said liberating the land from Israeli occupation is a legitimate right guaranteed by religious principles and international law.

Hamas on Diplomat Meetings

JN2802115093 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Feb 93, p 27

[By 'Awdah 'Awdah]

[Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has announced that, for the first time, arrangements have been to hold a meeting tomorrow between the Russian ambassador in Amman and a delegation of the movement, within the framework of the movement's meetings with the ambassadors of the Western countries to explain its position on the deportees issue.

In an exclusive interview with AL-RA'Y, Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, the official spokesman for Hamas, said that direct and indirect meetings between the movement's representatives and the embassies of the Western countries had never taken place before the deportees issue. Previous attempts to hold meetings were made by some Western countries, including the United States and Britain, but the movement was apprehensive about such meetings. He said he hoped that all future Hamas activities would be carried out in the name of the PLO.

Regarding the details of these meetings, the Hamas official spokesman said: On 17 December 1992, when reports indicated that more than 400 Palestinians were about to be deported from Palestine and that they were waiting on the northern border of Palestine for the decision of the so-called Israeli court, it was necessary to begin moves to prevent the deportation crime. The movement sent five messages to the ambassadors of the Security Council permanent member states in Amman, requesting to meet with these ambassadors to put them in the picture of that dangerous action and urge them to prevent the deportation.

Engineer Ghawshah said the U.S. Embassy in Amman sent a diplomat to meet with the movement who was handed a written message on Hamas' demand, and the other messages were sent to the other embassies. He added that a month later, another meeting with Hamas was held in Amman at the request of the U.S. side. The American diplomat proposed the repatriation of a number of Palestinians who were deported after 1967 as a sort of activatation of the deportation issue and as a prelude to repatriate all deportees. Hamas rejected the proposal and explained to the American diplomat that the movement wants all those deported after 1967 and all Palestinians to return to their land, and considered the U.S. proposal an attempt to circumvent the main and central issue, that is the deportation of the 415 Palestinians.

The Hamas spokesman added: When the Israeli Embassy in Paris distributed a memorandum to the Western embassies on the nature of Hamas Movement in a clearly provocative and distorted manner, accusing Hamas of extremism and terrorism, Hamas sent letters to 60 countries, including the permanent members of the Security Council. It also requested to meet with the ambassadors in Amman to explain the true nature of Hamas as a national, Palestinian, and Islamic liberation movement.

He noted: Three European countries, Britain, Italy, and Germany, responded to us, and meetings were held with the ambassadors of these three countries to explain the movement's objectives, which focus on struggle with all available means against the Zionist occupation. This struggle is considered legitimate by all religious and international laws. It is a right that has been practiced by all peoples against occupation, including the European peoples. The Hamas Movement concentrates its operations against the occupation soldiers and settlers, and does not carry out any operations abroad. On the other hand, the Zionist occupation forces kill children, demolish houses, and expel the cream of our Palestinian people. The movement urged the ambassadors to ask their countries to support Resolution 799 and to secure the immediate and collective return of the deportees to their families and homeland.

He pointed out that other direct meetings will be held, and the movement has insisted on meeting only with the ambassadors since the U.S. Embassy had suggested sending a diplomat. However, the movement refused and insisted on meeting with the U.S. ambassador himself.

He described the Hamas efforts as normal and complementary to the movement's intifadah, jihad, and political and media activities. He hoped that all the Hamas activities would very soon be carried out in the name of the PLO, once the obstacles placed by the PLO leadership before Hamas' admission into the PLO are overcome. Hamas demands withdrawal from the [Middle East peace] negotiations, and conducting a comprehensive national dialogue by all effective Palestinian forces.

He added: The Hamas movement is willing to place all its capabilities under the PLO umbrella once the differences preventing such a step are removed.

On the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour, the Hamas spokesman said: The 9th round of negotiations will not be held as long as the deported brothers remain outside their homeland, taking into consideration that our movement rejects negotiations with the Zionist usurper enemy, and rejects the Madrid and Washington talks in particular. We believe that the Palestinian delegation cannot go to the negotiations while more than 80 percent of the Palestinian people reject them as long as the deportees issue is not resolved through the immediate and collective return of the deportees.

He added: At the same time, some Arab parties will be committed to not going to the negotiations if the Palestinian side does not go. This means that the 9th round of negotiations, due to be held in Washington next April, is destined to be aborted, especially in light of the crystal-clear position of the deportees, Hamas, and the Palestinian people calling for the return of all deportees together.

PLO Briefs Hamas on Christopher Talks

JN2702094393 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 27 Feb 93 pp 1, 29

[Report by Tawfiq 'Abid: "Fatah Briefs Hamas on Christopher's Proposals To Resolve Deportee Issue"]

[Text] Amman—Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat has instructed 'Abbas Zaki, secretary of the higher committee of the intifadah, and Mamduh Nawfal to officially contact the leadership of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in Jordan over the issue of deportees in Marj al-Zuhur.

Palestinian sources have told AL-DUSTUR that a lengthy meeting was held here yesterday in the presence of Hamas representative Muhammad Nazzal and 'Imad al-'Alami. During their meeting, the Palestinian leadership's envoys raised two points presented by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Palestinians on Tuesday [23 February]. These are the return of the deportees according to a timetable and an Israeli pledge not to deport others. The two envoys also briefed the Hamas leadership on the details of the U.S. official's tour of the region and the ideas Christopher presented during official meetings between the Palestinian and U.S. sides in Jerusalem.

AL-DUSTUR has learned that the meetings will continue today and tomorrow with the aim of reaching a specific formula to solve the deportee issue, which is obstructing the resumption of negotiations.

An unofficial meeting was held last Saturday. It brought together Mamduh Nawfal and Muhammad Nazzal as part of the ongoing effort to have Hamas join the PLO. The two sides exchanged views on possible means to resolve the deportee issue.

Hamas Official Denies Seeking To Replace PLO

JN0203083293 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 2 Mar 93 pp 1, 5

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Sana' 'Atiyah]

[Text] Amman—The Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) unease over the Islamic Resistance Movement's (Hamas) diplomatic contacts with Western embassies in Amman and PLO fears that the Islamic group was trying to play an alternative role to the PLO is unfounded, a Hamas leader said Monday [1 March].

Hamas representative in Amman Muhammad Nazzal said the diplomatic offensive was not an effort to undermine the role of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, but an effort to convince the West that Hamas was not a terrorist group.

"The PLO fears over our contacts with Western embassies is unfounded," Mr. Nazzal told the Jordan Times. "This move is not and should not contradict the efforts of the PLO since we are not trying to be the organisation's alternative representative."

Hamas leader met last week with the British, French, German and Italian ambassadors, and twice with U.S. diplomat Eric Guadiosi after reports said the U.S. was labelling the Islamic movement as a "terrorist" organisation. The group is also trying to establish contact with Amman-based ammbassadors from member states of the U.N. Security council.

These meetings drew an angry reaction from PLO officials in Tunis, who have so far failed have to convince Washington to resume its dialogue with the PLO. [sentence as published] The dialogue was suspended after an aborted attack on a Tel Aviv beach by a Palestinian faction in May 1991.

A senior PLO official in Amman described the Hamas diplomatic moves as "looking for a direct role to deal with the expulsion issue."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was referring to Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians, whom Israel said were Hamas and Islamic

Jihad activists. The official insisted that "Hamas has found itself cornered and its hands tied with the expulsion issue."

"The expulsion crisis made Hamas realise that the PLO was the only legitimate body which could deal with the crisis, since it is the only organisation internationally recognised as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," the officials added.

But Mr. Nazzal dismissed accusations that Hamas was trying to take over the role of the PLO, saying that establishing contacts with Western governments was a "legitimate right to avoid being labelled as terrorists."

Palestinian analysts, however, said that American acceptance to meet with Hamas representative while continuing its ban on contacts with the PLO was a part of U.S. efforts to pressure the PLO into accepting Secretary of State Warren Christopher's six-point plan and return to the negotiating table scheduled in April.

The plan, which the PLO said needed some improvement before accepting it and which was completely rejected by Hamas and the expellees, includes the "accelerated return of the evictees in compliance with resolution 799," which calls on Israel to immediately repatriate all the evictees. Hamas and the evictees insist on the full implementation of 799 and say that the PLO acceptance or rejection of the offer to return to the negotiations has no impact on Hamas' position since it opposes the peace talks altogether.

Mr. Nazzal, who maintained that the ambassadors he met with agreed on the full implementation of Resolution 799, said that the PLO "should know better than to worry about Hamas becoming an alternative leadership."

"We are rejected by the West, where we are considered Islamic fundamentalists," Mr. Nazzal said. "It is also difficult for the West to swallow our policy of liberation from the sea to the river."

Hamas, like all other Islamist groups, opposes the peace talks which are based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 calling for Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, insists on taking back all of Palestine and refuses to recognise Israel.

Mr. Nazzal reiterated that Hamas was trying to convince Western governments that its armed activity was limited to the occupied territories against Israeli occupation forces and not against civilian targets, nor against Western targets outside Palestine. "Thus we do not fall under the definition of terrorists," he said Hamas has claimed responsibility to the killing of more than six Israeli soldiers, including an officer the group kidnapped before killing. The killings were cited by Israel as one of the main reasons for the expulsions.

Meanwhile, an American denial was conveyed to the Palestinians of recent statements by a State Department official that the U.S. continued to consider the PLO as a "terrorist" group to justify its rejection of resuming the U.S.-PLO dialogue, PLO sources told the Jordan Times.

The sources said that the PLO had protested against the American statements labelling it as "terrorist." The State Department sent a letter to the Palestinians reassuring them that "these statements were the personal opinion of one official, and the administration policy does not regard the PLO as a terrorist organisation."

DFLP Urges Hamas To Unconditionally Join PLO

JN2702081193 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 27 Feb 93 pp 1, 5

[By Maryam Shahin]

[Excerpts] Amman—The Tunis-based wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) celebrated the 24th anniversary of the group by calling on the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas to join the ranks of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) unconditionally.

"Events of the past two months have proven that the PLO is the sole representative of all the Palestinian people. Hamas should thus join the PLO ranks today and unconditionally accept the umbrella of the PLO," said a statement sent to the JORDAN TIMES by the DFLP organisers Friday [26 February].

As the sole representative of the Palestinian people, the "PLO should be directly involved in the peace talks," said the statement by the group, which is headed by PLO Executive Committee member and information chief Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh.

Hamas has demanded that the PLO offer it a minimum number of the seats on the Palestine National Council (PNC) in return for coming under the PLO umbrella.

The Tunis-based DFLP wing had been sceptical of the need to have Hamas join the PLO. But after the apparent increase in Hamas's popularity in the wake of Israel's expulsion in December of some leading Hamas activists, DFLP officials now deem it politically necessary. [passage omitted]

"We urge the U.S. to reopen the dialogue with the representatives of the Palestinians. There is no need for back-door dialogue any longer. Everyone knows the PLO is directing Palestinian politics at the peace table," said the statement.

Known as the DFLP—'Abd-Rabbuh wing among Palestinians, the group recently wing agreed to represent in the PLO the first full-fledged Palestinian party based in the occupied territories. [sentence as published]

The Palestinian Democratic Federation, also known by the acronym FIDA, will become fully operative as a party during the month of Ramadan, West Bank organisers say.

The Tunis-based DFLP wing agreed to represent FIDA in the PLO Executive Committee, the Palestine Central Council (PCC) and the PNC. While Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh is not the head of the party he will represent the party's interests outside the occupied territories along with other DFLP officials belonging to his branch of the party.

"We, as a group have always chosen the 'realistic' way, the way of cohabitation and mutual recognition," said Friday's statement.

"We chose to de-centralise while others were centralising even more than previously," the statement said.

"Our merger with FIDA shows that we are taking the decision-making powers and the leadership back to the occupied territories and will not hold on to it regardless of the consequences." DFLP activist Mamduh Nawfal told the JORDAN TIMES. [passage omitted]

"We call on our Arab brothers to coordinate our efforts to accomplish a total Arab-Israeli peace and not a partial, fractured one—a land for peace formula," said the statement.

The intifadah must continue till peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is achieved and until the occupation of the Palestinian lands ends," it said.

DFLP Leader Urges Adherence to Resolution 799

JN0103104693 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 1 Mar 93 pp 1, 19

[By Riyad Mansur]

[Text] Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], has warned that any attempt to fragment or circumvent Security Council Resolution 799 will mean opening the door for an international legalization of expulsions and for giving Rabin's government a chance to carry out new transfers.

Reached by telephone in Damascus, Hawatimah told SAWT AL-SHA'B that if there is any fragmentation of Resolution 799, then all doors will be open for the fragmentation of Resolutions 242 and 338. This, he said, would mean a fragmentation of the principle of land for peace.

Hawatimah called for firm adherence to Resolution 799, adding that the Palestinian people's firm stand will protect this resolution from the deals struck by the U.S. Administration, Egypt, and Tel Aviv and from the Palestinian bureaucracy's attempts to renounce firm adherence to the above resolution.

The DFLP secretary general called for safeguarding the stance toward the issue of deportees. Otherwise, he said, the Palestinian, Arab, and international ranks will be split over the Rabin government's insistence on bypassing the resolution and peddling the U.S.-Rabin deal.

Hawatimah wondered how the bilateral and multilateral talks could resume while major dangers are emerging, indicating that the one who compromises on the implementation of a resolution calling for the return of 400 deportees will later compromise on Resolutions 242 and 338.

Denounces Rabin Policy in Letter

TA0103123093 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 1 Mar 93 p 2

[Report by Dan Avidan]

[Excerpts] Nayif Hawatimah, head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], yesterday sent a written message to Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, one of the prominent Israeli Arab notables, who is close to the PLO. In his message, Hawatimah denounces Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's policy which, he says, is a continuation of that of the Likud and which cannot bring about a reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians.

Hawatimah proposes in the message to hold bilateral and multilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with a Palestinian delegation composed of representatives of the PLO and the Palestinian diaspora, besides residents of the territories. He suggests that the negotiations be based on the land-for-peace principle and on UN resolutions pertaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict, with an emphasis on Resolutions 242, 338, and 194. The latter speaks of the refugees' right to return home or to receive reparations. Such negotiations, he says, can pave the way for comprehensive and balanced peace. Hawatimah notes that the Palestinians aim to achieve "independence and self-determination" through the negotiations.

The DFLP leader denounces the deportation of 400 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists, which he terms "a transfer." He demands their return, asserting that continued Israeli policy will build "a China wall" between Israel and the Palestinians, rather than bring peace. [passage omitted]

Hawatimah's decision to reiterate his stands at this time was designed to appeal to the Israeli left wing, presumably in a bid to secure left-wing pressure on the Rabin government to return the Hamas deportees.

Negotiator Interview on Christopher Meetings

TA0103162493 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in English 1 March 93 p 16

[Interview with Ghassan al-Khatib, member of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, by Khalid Abu-'Akir; place and date not given]

[Text] Q: The meetings with Christopher gave an impression that the Palestinians left the door open for participation in the coming round of peace talks. How do you view this?

A: I think the Palestinians have always expressed the opinion that they are eager to resume the peace talks. The only reason they are not able to accept an invitation is that there have been some obstacles put in the way by the Israeli government; namely, the expulsion. What the Palestinian side told Christopher is that as soon as the expellee problem is solved, then they will be willing to resume the talks. The other thing that was discussed with the secretary were items related to the substance of the negotiations. The message was that there is a need to affect the Israeli side to make changes in their negotiating position, to bring it in harmony with the terms of reference of the negotiations, namely Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. This means in particular that Israel should accept to acknowledge that the land we are negotiating about is occupied land, as detailed in 242. Furthermore, the authority—the Palestinian elected body—should have geographic jurisdiction to include all the land occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. Changes in the Israeli position in this direction are needed in order that the resumption of the talks will not bring us back to the point where we ended—a deadlock in the last two rounds.

Q: In the beginning, the Palestinians declared that they would not go to the talks until all the expellees are returned. Now they are talking about a solution as being enough to return to the talks. Is there any difference in the use of these terms among Palestinians?

A: No, in fact the solution we envisage should be the Israeli acceptance and implementation of Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the immediate return of the expellees. Whenever we say, "a solution," this is what we mean. This was made clear to the secretary verbally and in a written memorandum.

Q: Will the Palestinians accept a compromise regarding this issue or will they insist on this position?

A: At this moment, the Palestinian position insists that the solution to this issue cannot be reached without Israeli compliance with Resolution 799.

Q: What about the proposal that the expellees will be returned when the talks resume?

A: There isn't such a proposal. There have been some new ideas discussed with the visiting secretary of state. These ideas are in line with Security Council Resolution 799, and we are waiting for answers from the Israeli government through the Americans on these points. If there is a positive Israeli response, then this might open the door for a solution to this crisis.

Q: Does that mean that the ideas that Christopher offered in his meetings with the Palestinians were acceptable?

A: These are not ideas suggested by Christopher. These are ideas that developed between us—the Palestinians and the American side—during the discussions. They were accepted by the Americans, and they promised to convince the Israeli side about them.

We think that these ideas include some positive elements, although there is a need to develop these ideas, in detail especially the points that relate to the substance of the negotiations and to the human rights issue. If we can agree on the details of these points, and if Israel would accept these, then this could make a breakthrough. So far, we have not noticed any positive indicators from the Israeli side in this regard.

Q: Before the meeting with Christopher, the Palestinians were looking to explore the position of the new American administration. Were you successful in doing so?

A: To a certain extent, yes. Not fully yet.

Q: Then how do you explain this position?

A: The new positive aspect is that the American side is willing to upgrade the level of its participation and its role in the peace process to be a full partner, which is a positive sign. But we are waiting for the American administration to spell out the mechanisms through which it can do this.

In addition to this, the other positive aspect that we managed to realize is that the Americans are enthusiastic to enhance the peace process, but we need some reports from them in order to make changes in the Israeli negotiating position that would allow progress in the peace process, especially on the issue of the jurisdiction of the interim self-government.

This exploration needs to be continued and that is why we ask for a continuation for this Palestinian-American dialogue, or discussion.

Q: Did the U.S. secretary of state explain what he meant by a "full-partner?"

A: Yes, he did, but not completely. It seems that this new role is not crystallized fully in their minds and is still in the process of developing.

Q: How do you regard the contents of the two letters that were sent by the American administration to Faysal al-Husayni?

A: First of all, the fact that they sent these letters reflects an interest on behalf of the American administration in pushing the peace process forward as much as possible. Second, the fact that this is the first time they sent official letters is also a positive sign. Third, the content of these letters is reassuring, which is also good.

However, because of our latest experiences, in which we got assurances and promises several times—which were not fulfilled by the Americans—this time we feel, in addition to these commitments, it would be useful if we could get an understanding of one of the mechanisms through which the U.S. Administration is going to fulfil this role and make efforts in order to come up with

results positively affecting the Israeli position vis-a-vis the substance of negotiations.

Q: Are you satisfied by Christopher's visit and the letters?

A: We think it is a good start, but it needs to be taken further—with more details and more concrete elements.

Q: During the meetings with Christopher, did he promise anything regarding the human rights violations by the Israelis in the occupied territories?

A: First, he listened to the presentations that the Palestinian side gave on this issue. Second, he received and read the reports that we gave him about the human rights violations. Third, he showed interest and promised to urge the Israeli side to ease their pressure on the population and make policies which are more respectful of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Q: Weren't there any promises?

A: General promises, but there were no specific things.

Q: What about the demand to resume the talks with the PLO?

A: Unfortunately, our request to resume the United States-PLO dialogue was not accepted till now. However, the reports that were on the media about statements criticizing the PLO were not correct at all. He was respectful in his statement in this regard, although he rejected our demand of resuming the talks.

Q: A meeting is to be held for the Arab foreign ministers in Damascus. If there is a decision for participation in the negotiations despite the unsolved issue of the expellees, what do you think the Palestinians' position will be?

A: As it has been all along in the peace process, I think the Arab foreign ministers, including the Palestinians, would be able to reach a unified position in this regard, especially since their countries are also concerned with Israel's respect and acceptance of 799. If Israel is able to escape this obligation, then it would also affect the Israeli attitude toward 242, which is as important to the Arabs as well as to the Palestinians.

I think we will be able to reach a common position vis-a-vis the future of the talks. There is an understanding between the Arabs and the Palestinians that there is an urgent need to solve the expulsion problem on the basis of 799 and that this is an obstacle for the resumption of the talks.

PLO Officials Said Lobbying in Washington

NC2702124093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1041 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Paris, 27 Feb (MENA)—The Arab L'Orient Radio station in Paris reported in its daily program "What the Newspapers Did Not Say" that an attempt is under way to control the flow of political statements made on behalf of the PLO. The aim is to restrict such statements to one spokesman and prevent the army of advisers from making contradictory statements every day.

On another issue, the radio said that several Palestinian officials are in Washington in a secret attempt to open channels with the new U.S. Administration and restore the PLO-U.S. dialogue.

Jerusalem as 'Most Important Issue' Stressed

JN0203112093 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Station commentary: "First and Last Words"]

[Text] Certainly, new U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the Middle East region has many implications, and even more consequences and obligations, which may be revealed in the coming days, and which will also reveal the elements of failure or success of this tour.

To begin with, the U.S. secretary of state's first mission outside his country was his Middle East tour. This proves that the Middle East, despite everything, will remain, for quite some time, the key to stability or instability in the world. As we all know, the Palestine question has been and is still the main factor in the Middle East equation. Christopher came to the Middle East to urge the parties to meet again on the bilateral level within the framework of the peace process which began in Madrid in the late 1991, which achieved no progress on the Arab-Israeli tracks, and whose progress was less than zero on the Palestinian track.

At the beginning of the term of the new U.S. Administration, to which Christopher belongs, the Zionist entity dealt a stupid and fatal blow to the entire peace process by expelling more than 400 Palestinians. When the UN Security Council issued Resolution 799 condemning the expulsions and calling for the immediate return of the expellees, the United States found itself facing a true test of its stand toward the international legitimacy resolutions. Was the United States in favor of implementing the resolution, or in favor of bypassing it? Very regrettably, Warren Christopher, before he began his tour in the region, concluded a deal with the Israelis which bypassed Resolution 799. This means that the U.S. secretary of state came to the region without any neutrality, which he lost at the very beginning. Although some Arab parties have given Christopher something for nothing through their repeated announcements that they will resume the talks without linking them with the expellee issue, this does not help resolve the problem, but further complicates it. The proof is that the Zionist entity, led by terrorist Yitzhaq Rabin, has escalated, throughout the expulsion period, the official systematic terrorism, the direct killing of Palestinians and their children, and the burning of their houses with helicopter missiles. It has also escalated its brutal military attacks against southern Lebanon. At the same time, the Zionist entity went back on its commitment to the four points

which the Americans previously said the Rabin government had announced commitment to. These points are: First: Israel's commitment to the implementation of Resolution 799 and to making immediate arrangements for the return of all expellees. Second: Returning a considerable number of expellees who have been expelled since 1967. Third: Israel's commitment to ending the policy of expulsion in the future. Fourth: Stressing Israel's commitment to UN Security Council Resolutions No. 242 and 338 as a basis for the peace negotiations, providing that this includes Jerusalem.

We see very clearly that the Israeli disavowal of these four clauses, particularly numbers three and four, threatens the core of the peace process and torpedoes dialogue with Israel. Some parties may find various interpretations for the implementation of Resolution 799 on the return of the expellees. However, the issue on which there can be no interpretations is the issue of Jerusalem, especially since Jerusalem, for us in the PLO and for all our Palestinian generations, is the most important issue. We have repeatedly affirmed our real seriousness about achieving peace. This is because we believe that peace is a gift for us as well as for others. However, the established fact is that the Palestinian peace has a single password; namely, Jerusalem.

Ex-Detainees Cite Torture in Israeli Jails

NC2702103793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0820 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Amman, 27 Feb (MENA)—Palestinians who were imprisoned for various periods in Israeli detention camps in the occupied Gaza Strip have said that detainees undergo hideous physical and psychological torture, solitary confinement, and harsh living conditions with meager food rations and an absence of health care.

The former detainees told MENA's correspondent in Amman that there are three detention camps in Gaza. The first is Gaza's Central Prison, dubbed al-Saraya [government house] by the Palestinians because it used to be the headquarters of the area's British governor and later the Egyptian governor. It is run by the Prisons Authority and houses inmates accused of serious security offenses. The second and third detention camps, Ansar and Khan Yunus, are run by Israeli Army forces and handle cases connected with the Palestinian intifadah.

The former detainees said that Gaza's Central Prison is one of the worst detention centers ever. Palestinian citizens can be held there for 18 days without being permitted legal counsel or given the opportunity to appear before a military judge. They are forced to sit up for days on end with their hands tied behind their backs, to bathe in cold water, and are put in very cold rooms. They said that two years ago the Israeli occupation authorities introduced a new tactic, called the refrigator method. It consists of putting detainees in a room for several hours that is alternately very hot and very cold. They said that investigators subject the detainees to inhuman blackmail to extort confessions. The investigators threaten to summon their mothers, wives, or sisters and rape them in front of them.

The former detainees said Israeli investigators rely on the fact that they are above the law and no Israeli judge or court can indict them for their actions. [passage omitted]

The former detainees said the Ansar detention camp is the scene of similar brutal and inhuman treatment. It is divided into several sections of four tents each. Some 20 to 30 detainees sleep on the floor in all kinds of weather. [passage omitted]

They said the Khan Yunus detention center is something of a way station with a constant population of 200-300 detainees who spend days there waiting for transfer to Gaza's Central Prison or the Ansar camp on the Gaza coast. They are subjected to various forms of oppression while waiting for their transfer. [passage omitted]

Algeria

Israeli 'Obduracy' Behind Stalled Peace Efforts

LD0203000493 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Peace in the Middle East will not be realized in the climate of Israeli obduracy. This is the conviction of all the Arab and other parties interested in the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict. So far, great efforts have been made to reach peace in the region and moves are currently under way to overcome obstacles. There are also more voices calling for implementation of international legitimacy. Among those voices is that of Algeria which addressed a call to the international community. Over to you Mahfoud:

[Correspondent Mahfoud] The call is addressed in particular to the United States and Russia in their capacity as co-sponsors of peace negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. Algeria in this call appealed for pressure to be put on Israel to bring it to respect international legitimacy by promptly implementing UN Security Council resolutions and by refraining from opposing durable peace in the Middle East region. A diplomatic source in Algeria said that on this occasion, Algeria insisted on renewing support for the PLO in any action it undertook to realize the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people.

As far the issue of the Palestinian deportees, the same source said that Algeria takes the view that implementing Security Council Resolution 799 remains the inevitable framework for settling the issue.

On the other hand, Algeria considers that peace would not be brought about without realizing the legitimate ambition of the Palestinian people, which is to establish a state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Algeria's call came following the visit by the president of the state of Palestine, Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, last Sunday. During that visit, he was received by Higher State Council Chairman Ali Kafi and also held talks with Mr. Redha Malek, council member and minister of foreign affairs.

Explosion Damages Chlef Telephone Exchange

LD0103082093 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The security services in Chlef Province report that the telephone exchange in the center of the town of Chlef was damaged on Friday [26 February] when a powerful home-made bomb exploded. the explosion wrecked about 4,000 telephone lines and three distribution points.

Egypt

Soldier Reported Killed by Suspected Extremists

NC2702182193 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Unidentified assailants shot dead an Egyptian soldier and took his weapon on an agricultural road in north Cairo. Police began a hunt for the culprits, who managed to flee and who are believed to be members of the extremist Islamic groups.

Tight Security at Cultural, Historical Sites

NC2702194693 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1907 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 27 Feb (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—Minister of Culture Faruq Husni has affirmed that stringent security measures have been adopted at all cultural spots, cinemas and theaters, museums, and historical sites.

He added that all these sites have been supplied with extremely modern equipment to detect explosives and weapons. Minister Husni noted that security personnel at all cultural sites have been instructed to search visitors thoroughly and to abide by all the security measures.

'Terrorist' With 18 Antiaircraft Shells Arrested

NC2802163593 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1445 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Feb (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—The police arrested a terrorist in Zifta in possession of 18 antiaircraft shells as he was on his way to sell them to extremists. Brigadier General Mahmud 'Abd-al-Salam, Zifta Police Station commander, has received information that 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Abd-al-Sami' Diyab, 42, an employee of the Zifta Town Council, was trading in arms and ammunition, and that he was in possession of 18 antiaircraft shells which he intended to sell to extremists. In a planned operation, the man was arrested with the shells in his possession.

Scheme To Blow Up Industrial Sites Uncovered

NC2702130193 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1035 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 27 Feb (AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY)—Informed sources have revealed that state security agencies have uncovered a scheme to blow up several important industrial installations in Kafr al- Dawwar. The security sources are carrying out extensive interrogations of several arrested individuals whose identities have not yet been revealed.

The informed sources have linked the new scheme with the major explosion in Kafr al-Dawwar textile factory's residential quarters last month which demolished or damaged five houses.

The sources noted that at that time the explosives experts' report on the blast said it resulted from planted explosive devices.

Al-Baz Meetings With Rabin, Peres Reported, Viewed

Envoy Views Meetings

NC0203083293 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Interview with Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, in Tel Aviv, by Shihatah Abu-al-Majd, in Cairo, on the "Dialogue From Afar" program; date not given—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Abu-al-Majd] Welcome to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Basyuni] Thank you.

[Abu-al-Majd] Ambassador, Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, accompanied by the director of the President's Office for Information, paid a brief visit to Israel. He carried a message from President Mubarak to the Israeli prime minister dealing with the peace process and other issues. What were the most important results of the visit and were you (?involved)?

[Basyuni] Egypt's efforts to advance the peace process are tangible and fruitful. If Dr. Usamah al-Baz's visit was part of these efforts, it also aimed to exchange views on current issues in a bid to continue the peace process.

[Abu-al-Majd] Ambassador, Dr. al-Baz delivered a message to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and also met the Israeli foreign minister. What topics were discussed at these meetings? In particular, what did they say about the Palestinian deportees problem? Should we expect an imminent solution?

[Basyuni] The meeting with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres emphasized the peace process, the deportees, and the multilateral talks and concentrated on economic development in the region. Talks during the meeting with the prime minister focussed primarily on the [word indistinct] removal of the obstacles hindering the resumption of the peace process. This, of course, [word indistinct] the deportees and finding a prompt solution to the problem so that we can move toward our greater goal—negotiations and peace. When we reach peace agreements, there will be no deportations or deportees. And there will be no oppressive Israeli practices in the occupied territories. [passage omitted]

'Responsible Source' Explains Aim

NC0103220293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2138 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 1 Mar (MENA)—A responsible source has said that the purpose of the visit by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, to Israel was to meet Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin for talks on the Palestinian deportees issue and the Middle East peace process. The source added that Dr. al-Baz' talks in Israel did not deal with any other issue.

Israeli radio and CNN have reported that President Mubarak will visit Israel this month. Meanwhile, the BBC this evening carried a denial of such a visit, citing a Presidential Office spokesman in Egypt. The radio said that these rumors were circulated following Dr. al-Baz' visit to Israel yesterday and the talks he held with Rabin.

'Power Conflict' Within SLP Viewed

NC2702191993 Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 25 Feb-3 Mar 93 p 2

[Report by 'Abd-al-'Azim Darwish]

[Text] A power conflict that plagued the ranks of Ibrahim Shukri's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) for nearly four years erupted into the open last weekend when a breakaway faction led by Ahmad Mujahid held what it called a general party congress. A few hours later on Friday, Shukri's mainstream group held a separate rally to affirm confidence in Shukri's leadership and Mujahid's dismissal from party ranks.

At their general congress, Mujahid's followers, who broke away in 1989 claiming they are the true SLP, re-elected Mujahid as party "chairman."

Both Shukri and Mujahid took their power conflict one step further by submitting memoranda to the Political Parties Committee, each asking for government recognition of his group as the true SLP. Shukri also filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court, demanding a court injunction that would nullify the proceedings of Mujahid's "general congress" and all its consequences.

In his opening speech to the "general congress", Mujahid complained that the semi-governmental Political Parties Committee has continued to deal with Shukri's faction, which he described as an "illegal entity." The Committee's action, he said, was a violation of "multi-party democracy" as well as the provisions of the law governing the activities of political parties.

Mujahid recalled that the conflict first began in 1989 when Shukri made a distinction between Islamists and secularists within the party membership, declaring his support for the Islamists. Accusing Shukri of rigging party elections that were held at the time, Mujahid said:

"It was they who broke away from the party, deviated from its programme and committed aggression against its statutes."

Mujahid, rejecting accusations that he and his faction were "tools in the hands of the state," counter-charged that Shukri's faction, in fact, was manipulated by the state because it continues to have its protection.

Within hours of Mujahid's "general congress" on Friday, about 5,000 Shukri followers held a rally to renew confidence in Shukri's leadership and policies. Shukri and his followers believe that Mujahid's actions are part of a government conspiracy to liquidate the SLP and shut down its newspaper.

At the conclusion of the rally, Shukri's followers issued a statement urging all political forces to support the SLP in is battle against "the ferocious offensive that seeks to liquidate the party and end the narrow margin of freedom" that is allowed by the government.

In Tuesday's edition, AL-SHA'B claimed that Mujahid's "general congress" was organised by the Interior Ministry and amounted to "aggression against Islam, freedom and the law."

Writer Views Government 'Democracy,' Unions Law

NC2702135493 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 25 Feb 93 p 3

[Article in the "Free Opinion" column by Ahmad Abu-al-Fath: "Enough Democracy...!!?"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Democracy everywhere has the same firm rules, except in Egypt whose democracy is unique. It discriminates between classes. It is the democracy of 50 percent.

One upside down phenomenon unique to "Egyptian democracy" is giving 50 percent of the people the right to pass laws on behalf of others who are more educated and cultured. This happens only in Egypt: The less educated and cultured legislate for the scientists and intellectuals.

"Egyptian democracy" is strengthened by imposing a law through which the government is attempting to appoint the councils of the doctors, engineers, teachers, commercial, and bar associations. It is a law passed by the same 50 percent.

The National Democratic Party [NDP] claims it is the majority party. Why, then, don't its supporters contest the professional associations council elections and try to run these councils by democratic means? Why?

Which method will enhance the democracy that the dictatorial [professional associations] law speaks of: NDP supporters contesting the associations elections or recourse to a hateful law seeking to control these associations? It is a hateful law and it brands those who passed it as despots. More than this, it is a frivolous law suitable for such books as "Kishkish Bey" and "Egypt's Lone Negro" [two fictitious characters used in famous social satires of the 1940s]. It requires 50 percent of an association's members to attend an election for it to be legal. Those who drew up the law know that the Commercial Association has more than 400,000 members, the Bar Association about 200,000, the Doctors Association around 110,000, etc. Where can such numbers meet? Furthermore, since the members accept the councils of their associations, why is the government interfering?

Every Egyptian knows that only 10 percent of the electorate vote in the referendum to choose a new president of the republic and that the government's claim that the vote is 99.99 percent of the 85 percent of the voters who participate is pure fantasy. Never in the history of Egyptian voting has 85 percent of the electorate ever voted.

What will happen if 90 percent refuse to vote in the next presidential referendum as in the past and as happened in the People's Assembly elections? Will the referendum be legal or illegal by the standards of the hateful new law on professional associations?

With "Egyptian democracy," the government is seeking to abolish a long-established political party whose leader has met the president, at the president's invitation, several times. Is this reasonable?

The party in question is the Socialist Labor Party. The government, in the name of "Egyptian democracy," is trying to transfer this party's leadership and membership from the man who led it for many years to another man and other members. This conspiracy is hiding behind a committee called the Political Parties Committee which constantly asserts that "Egyptian democracy" is contrary to all the world's democracies.

Democracy gives the people the inalienable right to form political parties without intermediaries or a parties committee. The Egyptian system is branding itself as non-democratic.

What will be the status of the Labor Party's members and leader after the party is transferred to another leadership and other members? Will they become outlaws if they hold a meeting?

The "majority" party owns 99 percent of Egypt's press and all the radio and television stations. Yet it can find no method to "enhance democracy" except by deposing an established political party and perpetrating the ugliest possible crime against the homeland by murdering the newspaper AL-SHA'B or unlawfully transferring it to new owners!

Isn't this an admission that the majority party is unable to answer the Labor Party's arguments and AL-SHA'B's reports? It would be possible to answer their argument if the press were truly free and not usurped for the use of the government and its party. [passage omitted]

Government, Associations 'Confrontation' Noted

NC2702192593 Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 25 Feb-3 Mar 93 p 2

[Excerpt] A major confrontation developed this week between the government of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and most professional syndicates opposing a new law that governs syndicate elections and activities. While strikes, agitation and protests continued at the offices of several syndicates, particularly those dominated by the Islamists, President Husni Mubarak vowed that there would be no going back on the law which he described as serving the public good and strengthening democracy.

But a head-on collision between the two sides appeared to have been averted at the last minute after the engineers' syndicate agreed to postpone by-elections, originally scheduled for tomorrow, until a date to be determined later.

The law, which many believe is aimed at curtailing the Islamists' control of the professional unions, was approved by the People's Assembly on 16 February at a stormy, six-hour session. Within two days, it was signed by Mubarak and published by the official gazette, thus becoming effective.

The law makes mandatory a 50 percent turnout of voters at any syndicate elections if they are to be valid. Failing that, the quorum is reduced to one third of voters in a second round of elections to be held two weeks later. The law also states that syndicate elections should not be held on Fridays and official holidays and prohibits syndicates from gathering or spending funds for purposes other than the service of their members (see last week's AL-AHRAM WEEKLY).

The strongest opposition to the new legislation came from the syndicates of engineers, lawyers and doctors—all dominated by the Islamists. Most lawyers boycotted court hearings last Sunday—unless their clients were in very urgent need of their services—while engineers abstained from work for two hours. Another one-hour token strike was called for today and all members of professional unions were urged to observe it.

The engineers' syndicate, in particular, appeared headed for a stand-off with the government. At a general assembly of the syndicate last Saturday, a vote of no confidence toppled the syndicate's chairman, Housing Minister Hasaballah al-Kafrawi, allowing his deputy, Ahmad Mazin, to step in as acting chairman. Equally serious, the syndicate decided to go ahead with by-elections originally scheduled for tomorrow (Friday) [26 February], although the new law prohibits elections on Fridays and official holidays. Large advertisements announcing that the elections would be held on schedule were published by the syndicate in all national newspapers.

Al-Kafrawi, who continues to consider himself syndicate chairman, responded with a statement that elections on Friday would be "a gross violation of the new law." The statement said that holding those elections on schedule "would make them null and void" and their organisers would be liable to prosecution. The statement said a new and legal date would be set.

Al-Kafrawi does continue to enjoy some support within the syndicate—though how extensive this may be is not known—several engineering companies published advertisements declaring that their members stand firmly behind him.

But the crisis appeared to have been defused—if only partially and temporarily—following a meeting Tuesday night between Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi and members of the engineers' syndicate council. Dr Muhammad 'Ali Bishr, the council's secretary general, told Al-Ahram Weekly that agreement was reached to postpone the by-elections scheduled for tomorrow and the following Friday. In the meantime, the syndicate would file a lawsuit with the Supreme Constitutional court contesting the legality of the legislation. "A new date would be set for the elections in light of the court's decision," he said.

The science syndicate did likewise and indefinitely postponed by- elections scheduled for tomorrow. The press syndicate, where elections were scheduled for 5 March, a Friday, also appeared headed for postponement.

Banners, posters and placards announcing opposition to the new law were hoisted atop the downtown offices of several syndicates. "No to the nationalisation of syndicates," announced a banner hanging from the walls of the lawyers' syndicate. Other signs at other syndicates read: "No to the slaying of democracy," "Hands off our syndicates" and "Democracy, how many crimes are committed in your name." [passage omitted]

Leader Denies Criticizing Approach to Hala'ib

NC2702131793 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Liberal Party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad has denied a report by the Sudanese Omdurman radio claiming that he rejects the Egyptian approach to resolving the Hala'ib issue.

In a statement to our radio and MENA's correspondent, Murad affirmed that he did not criticize the Egyptian Government's approach to solving this issue. He said that he did not describe the Egyptian conduct toward Sudan in connection with Hala'ib as condescending.

Mustafa Kamil Murad said he was a member of a good offices committee that visited Sudan in an attempt to bring the Egyptian and Sudanese views on Hala'ib closer. We listened to the various views from the Sudanese president, parliament speaker, and ministers concerned and conveyed these views to the Egyptian Government, he said.

We concluded the visit by calling for a resumption of the Hala'ib committee meetings in Cairo and Khartoum without preconditions, he said.

Mubarak Receives American-Jewish Representatives

NC0203084293 Cairo MENA in English 0700 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, March 2 (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak received yesterday a delegation of leaders of the American-Jewish organizations, currently visiting Egypt, the three Cairo Arabic morning dailies reported on their front-pages this morning.

The meeting dealt with the peace process and efforts exerted to eliminate obstacles impeding the peace march besides the economic future of the Middle East region after the realization of peace and stability there, the papers said.

First foreign under secretary and director of the President's Bureau for Political Affairs, Dr. Usamah al-Baz, who attended the meeting along with the U.S. ambassador in Cairo, said the Jewish delegation was among the supporters of promoting cooperation in the field of investment between Egypt and the U.S.

These organizations were also supporters of establishing good relations between the U.S. and the Arab countries in general in order to boost the peace process in the region, Cairo press, further quoting Dr. al-Baz, reported.

The delegation was keen to bolster economic cooperation between the U.S. and Egypt and carry out joint economic ventures and encourage investment, he added. [passage omitted]

Balance of Trade With Syria Shows Surplus

NC0103111093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Damascus, 1 Mar (MENA)—The trade balance between Egypt and Syria has registered a surplus in favor of Egypt amounting to $26.6 million dollars during the first nine months of 1992.

Dr. Yahya 'Id, director of the Egyptian trade office in Syria, told MENA today that the value of Egypt's exports to Syria during this period amounted to $34.9 million while Egypt's imports from Syria amounted to $8.3 million.

Dr. Yahya 'Id adds that this surplus is a result of Egypt's industrial development. Iron, steel, and aluminum products, as well as transportation vehicles constitute the prominent Egyptian goods exported to Syria. Dried apricot sheets; dried figs, whose value amounted to $9.5 million [figure as received]; wool; lentils; and cigarettes constitute the most important Syrian products exported to Egypt.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Discusses Oil Revenues

LD0103102493 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2058 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Brothers, within the context of the brother leader of the revolution's address to the General People's Congress at its final extraordinary session in Sidra on 18 November last year, at which the brother leader announced plans for the distribution of the oil wealth equally among Libyan families, and in implementation of the achievement of an ivory tower Jamahiriyah where all the people are rich and all of them are partners, the brother leader met the secretary of the General People's Committee for Energy and the governor of the Libyan Central Bank so as to become acquainted with the results of the work of the experts' committees that are concentrating on studying the issue of distributing oil revenues among Libyans. We present a recording of the meeting:

[Begin recording] [Al-Qadhdhafi] Dr. 'Abd al-Hafiz, governor of the Central Bank; and Mr. 'Abdallah al-Badri, energy, oil and electricity secretary. After the meeting of the General People's Congress in which I said that the oil revenues should be directly distributed among the Libyan families—naturally there were meetings before that with you and discussions of the matter—what is the total of our oil revenues and how much of it do we spend. We saw that there is a possibility of distributing something directly among Libyan families.

After the announcement at the General People's Congress I met you, and I commissioned you to conduct a study of the actual implementation of this idea. How can we implement it theoretically and practically. You have advisors in your institutions. You have consulted them on their studies. [indistinct passage omitted: Conversation between al-Qadhdhafi and the two officials introducing some of the advisors employed in the studies]

Today, in fact, I want an answer from you. The idea we announced—how can we implement it in practice and what are the technical, financial, banking and administrative aspects, so that the people can understand what they are owed and what they owe? Dr. 'Abd al-Hafiz, please speak as if you are talking to students. Speak clearly in an ordinary way so that the people will understand.

[Al-Hafiz] [passage omitted] As you mentioned in your statement, when you intervened we were, in principle, basing our view on the idea of distributing 50 percent of the oil revenues. It is possible for this percentage to be increased gradually whenever Libyans do without the services provided by the public bodies on their behalf. [passage omitted] Oil has been the engine of economic activity for some time, and most economic activities are based on oil. [passage omitted] Oil represents 98 percent of the state's foreign exchange revenues, and thanks to investments in the last two decades, oil now represents about 32 percent of the GNP. At one time it represented

a very large percentage—over 80 percent—but year after year, and as a result of the great investments made by the people, whether in the domain of public basic services such as roads, airports, ports, hospitals, public services, telecommunications, etc, or those made by the people in the spheres of industry, farming, facilities, etc, these sectors are now generating an income for the masses worth about 70 percent. [passage omitted]

[Al-Badri] [passage omitted] After you entrusted us, leader, with this responsibility, we analyzed our assets and liabilities. We wanted to know about oil revenues and ways to manage them. We have chosen a practical example, which is the present fiscal year. The figures we are going to present are those from 1 April to 31 December 1992. These are definite oil revenues. The first figure shows sales abroad;, these are oil exports, either exports of oil, oil by-products, or gas. These amount to 2.041 million [currency not specified] or $2 billion.

The local sales are the products refined in our own refineries and sold through (?Oil Brit-Esso) in that period, i.e., for nine months. The oil revenues amounted to 2.150 [currency not specified]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The (?150) represent those for local needs, i.e., local sales.

[Al-Badri] Yes. The sales abroad in foreign currency are those amounting to 2.041 million [currency not specified].

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Say 2 billion [currency not specified].

[Al-Badri] [Passage omitted including indistinct passage]

I now want to explain about oil prices; i.e., we sold oil at 13 dollars per barrel in 1986, at 18 dollars in 1987, at 15 dollars in 1988, at 17 dollars in 1989, at about 24 dollars in 1990 during the Gulf war, at 18 dollars in 1991, and at 19 dollars in 1992, and now that there is a crisis at 17 dollars. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We said that Libya's oil revenues amount to 9 billion dollars a year. We want to know how you will manage this 9 billion dollars. Tell us, we are the people and you are the experts from banks and in buying and selling—where does it go.

[Al-Badri] The oil revenue that we paid directly into the treasury amounts to 1.008 billion dinars.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Before you bring in the figures, tell us who gets the 9 billion dollars.

[Al-Badri] This goes to the treasury, most of it for salaries; i.e. 47 percent.

[Al-Qadhdhafi, interrupting] No, no what are the parties for which it is divided in general?

[Al-Badri] Now as far as oil is concerned, revenues go to the Treasury, and the doctor [the Central Bank governor] will clarify where this amount goes.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] You sell the oil and take the funds and deposit them in the Central Bank.

[Al-Badri] That is in dollars, and we give it in dinars to the Treasury.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This means you take 9 billion dollars and put it in the Central Bank every year. This is your task. You sell oil, and according to the current price and the quantity sold by Libya you get 9 billion dollars a year. You put this 9 billion dollars in the bank. Now we want to know where the bank distributes it afterward, so we can know what our share would be if we wanted to take this oil money. Where does the money go? Sometimes one may say to you: give us all the money and we can do without all these expenditures. Sometimes one may say to you: no, keep your money and mind your expenditures and spare us these problems. We want to know where the money goes. I think Dr. 'Abd al-Hafiz can tell us where this 9 billion dollars goes after having been put into the bank.

[Al-Hafiz] This map appears complicated, but it is not. It links the exports of oil and gas touched upon by Dr. 'Abdallah al-Badri, who said that nine months brought in 7 billion dollars. This is a real figure for the past year, as of 31 December 1992. The precise figure is 7.037 billion dollars.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We want to know about oil; it brought in 9 billion dollars in hard currency in a year, which was put in the Central Bank. Tell us who then gets this money, which you put aside and then distribute, so we may know to the bitter end where the money goes.

[Al-Hafiz] In arrangements with the Treasury, when the oil money goes into the Central Bank, then Libyan currency is issued in accordance with the current exchange rate...

[Al-Qadhdhafi] After you get 9 billion dollars, you print the equivalent Libyan currency to be distributed inside the country.

[Al-Hafiz] We issue Libyan currency, which is at the disposal of the Treasury.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This means that for every three dollars, you issue one dinar as an equivalent. This means that for 9 billion dollars, you issue 3 billion Libyan dinars. Yes, we want to know; this means our income is 3 billion Libyan dinars, which are printed by the bank to be spent inside the country.

[Al-Badri] The 3 billion Libyan dinars go to three parties.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This is exactly what we want to know.

[Al-Badri] The first party is the Treasury, in the form of income, the second one is the oil establishment, as the latter carries out the operation.

[Al-Qadhdhafi, interrupting] Before you get into details: one part goes to the Treasury, one part goes back to the oil sector, and the third part is a reserve; i.e. part of it stays as reserves in the form of investments.

Now tell us which are the third parts so we can know them; i.e, you distribute the 9 billion dollars we got to three parties: the Treasury, oil sector, and reserves.

This is so we know the importance of every unit, whether to tell you: leave the money in these sectors, or: these are not necessary and give us the money and forget about reserves, oil, and the general budget. We want to know where the revenues go, what the Treasury does with it, what the oil sector does with it. What do you do with the oil quota, when the Central Bank gives you back the revenues?

[Al-Badri] It is first used for oil exploration, as our policy is that it is necessary for us to discover new oil to replace any quantity that is extracted and exported. For example, we produced 500 million barrels in 1992, we should thus discover new oil in order to replace the oil extracted.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Suppose we do not give you this amount of money.

[Al-Badri] This means that the reserves I have will get less and less and will be quickly exhausted. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Well, where do you invest it?

[Al-Hafiz] These investments are normally invested in the international market, where spheres of investment are very wide. We know that...

[Al-Qadhdhafi, interrupting] That is in foreign banks for foreign investments. You put it in foreign banks so it gets profits, and it piles up like that until we get a reserve.

[Al-Hafiz] Yes, and we get annual interest; i.e., in the region of 10-15 percent revenue from investments is added to the investment portfolio. This portfolio is cultivated so it remains a reserve, as I have said. [passage omitted]

[Al-Badri] This year's budget was built on forecasts of oil income of 912 million dinars in cash and 372 million dinars [not further identified]; i.e., a total of 1.284 bilion dinars of oil income. There is other income in the form of various taxes and duties: 967 million dinars. The total income for the current financial year is estimated at 2.251 billion Libyan dinars, 57 percent of which comes from oil—from oil income.

[Al-Hafiz] Fifty-seven percent of it comes from oil—from oil revenues.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We said that we get 9 billion dollars, and we convert it into Libyan currency, and it becomes 3 billion dinars. Where is the rest, as we have (?2,800) [not further identified].

[Al-Hafiz] We did not count the expenditures for oil and those that we will devote to investment, the reserves. This is the income that is expected to be received by the Treasury in the 1992-93 financial year. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] We want to know which amounts come from oil.

[Al-Hafiz] 1.284 billion.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This comes from oil.

[Al-Hafiz] This is the allocation of the Treasury, the secretariat of the Treasury.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This is the allocation that the Treasury spends on public expenditures and development.

[Al-Hafiz] Yes. [passage omitted] The Treasury needs to spend 2.6 billion dinars on the administrative budget for salaries and public expenditures. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] It seems this 3 billion dinars does not all come from oil.

[Al-Hafiz] No, it is not all from oil.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Part of this 3 billion dinars comes from taxes and other income, which amount to nearly 1 billion dinars.

[Al-Hafiz] Yes. [passage omitted]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Well, if you will excuse me, we need to be more specific to help the people watching us. They are very interested in this, and this is their main concern. This will avoid creating confusion in people's minds. When we talk about oil revenues, which is a subject I raised at the General People's Congress and which we had discussed prior to that, we see that these revenues stand at 9 billion dollars. I might have exceeded that figure and I might have said they could be 10 billion dinars. My calculations were based on this figure, namely that Libyan oil revenues were 10 billion dollars. I then said let us take 5 billion dollars and leave it for the state; that is, for the three recipients [the Treasury, the oil sector, and reserves], and the remaining 5 billion should be shared among the people. [passage omitted]

The remaining 5 billion dollars, when turned into Libyan currency, will make 1.5 billion Libyan dinars. In other words, the budget available to us is estimated at 1.5 billion Libyan dinars if we distribute the other 5 billion dollars among Libyan families. [passage omitted]

[Al-Badri] We now anticipate a budget deficit of 572 million Libyan dinars.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The deficit—how does it happen?

[Al-Badri] The deficit is explained by the current expenditures of the administrative budget, the development budget, and the defense budget—a total of 2.823 billion dinars, while income is 2.251 billion dinars. Thus the deficit is 572 million dinars. If you now take away 5

billion dollars—and we maintain the administrative budget as it is, the development budget as it is, and the defense budget as it is—then you would have a 2 billion-dinar deficit.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Allow me, I have a remark: we are addressing the general public, who may be illiterate in terms of figures, budgets, expenditure, trade budget, etc. They may not know all this. We are not addressing people like you, whose number is quite large among the Libyan people—there are many people with higher degrees, educated people, instructed people, graduates. All these people are against this project [of distributing oil money to the people]. The day before yesterday, a university professor told me: I am against, completely against, distributing oil money among Libyans; this talk is wrong and it should not be. The educated, the enlightened—and you are among them—are against this project. They say there is no state that distributes its income among the people directly. This does not exist. [passage omitted

Now let us sum it up: Our net oil income would be 1.5 billion Libyan dinars. Why? Because 5 billion dollars would be frozen in the bank to be distributed to people directly, and we would be left with 5 billion dollars to administer. We would turn this into Libyan currency to circulate in the Libyan market; i.e., 1.5 billion dinars. [passage omitted] Tell me how 1.5 billion Libyan dinars would be distributed.

[Al-Hafiz] Our expenditure needs total 2.823 billion dinars.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This is simple; you need to spend the way you are now or 3 billion Libyan dinars a year that you spend as salaries, public expenditure for the state and on transformation; i.e., on development in Libya in general. [sentence as heard] [passage omitted]

[Unidentified speaker] Technically speaking, the aim of adding oil revenues to individuals' income, the ordinary citizen, is to raise his standard of living. If that income is spent on that family and nobody else, the standard of living of that family will rise. But if it is spent on the guest work force—be it foreign or otherwise—that would mean the amount of income that we denied for the process of transformation, importation needs, and the Libyan state would not go directly to the Libyan family but to someone else.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] You mean to tell me that I intend to distribute oil revenues directly to Libyan families in order to raise the living standard of the Libyan family directly—not through industry or agriculture or something else? We give the citizen a sum of money and leave him to manage himself how to spend it to raise his standard of living. You are telling me that the Libyan families' economic standard would not improve. Why? Because there is a partner with it. This is like someone, forgive my example, who has worms inside his stomach and we feed him. Naturally someone with worms inside his intestines will be weak. However much we feed him, his condition will not improve. Why? Because there is a partner with him sharing his food, which is the worms. First you have to remove the worms and then feed him so the benefit will be his. Is this what you mean?

[Unidentified speaker] Yes, this is what we mean.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] Let this be clear to the Libyan people: If every Libyan family has a worker from outside the home, this means half a million foreign nationals are working from outside the home.

[Unidentified speaker] Yes.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] And if everyone who employs a
ants, this will mean another 200-250,000 in addition to the shops; i.e., the hairdresser, the hotel, the workshop, the farm, and the cooperative if there are a number of foreigners working there.

If we look at those craftsmen and how many foreigners are with them, we could find about 1 million foreign nationals working with the Libyan people. You mean to say that we can not distribute oil revenue unless we exclude this segment of people, to exclude the foreign worker [redif]. [passage omitted]

[Al-Hafiz] If this additional income is not accompanied by real production and an increase of goods and services, its result will be additional spending;, inflation of prices and a fall of the Libyan dinar itself. This is among the main problems to which we must pay attention—expenditure must be at the level of what can be produced. Every expenditure must have in counterpart goods and services produced internally so you can activate the economy, agriculture, industry, and all other sectors. [passage omitted: people with high income do not need share of oil money and there is need to find specific information on individual income of Libyans and set up a good tax system to narrow gap between rich and poor; governor saying income distribution needs precise data which is not available]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] What you are saying is that there is a category of people, namely guest workers, who exist alongside the Libyan people, and that before distributing money directly among Libyans, guest workers have to be dealt with first. You are also saying that differences among Libyans must be heeded. That means we cannot distribute money evenly among people who are not equal as there are very big differences separating the rich from the poor. Those differences do exist, particularly the fact that the rich have acquired wealth in an unproductive way. It is not as if they had a farm or a factory which they have developed; they get money without offering anything in return for it. Beside, that causes price increases.

[Al-Hafiz] As a result of increased spending without a production rate to match it.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] When we have money our demands increase, while we do not produce anything.

[Al-Hafiz] Therefore, extra cash has to be regulated. [passage omitted: al-Qadhdhafi comments on international currency fluctuations; the Libyan dinar is weak because there is no production other than oil; imports of consumer goods should be controlled]

[Al-Hafiz] We have spent very large investments on plants, and it suffices to say that the industry sector now has 52,000 workers who produce various goods: cement, metal products, and other goods. These people greatly rely on our oil income in foreign exchange so that we may provide them with raw materials. If the latter are reduced, then the plant production for which we have invested would decrease by 50 percent, and we would perhaps have to reduce the workforce. We would thus harm what I believe are the correct projects which we have initiated—the use and exploitation of the investments and the plants we have set up.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] This means that the state would abandon its tasks in the spheres of health, education, defense, security, and many other things, which it won't be able to assume in full as it is doing now. Well, perhaps we do not want the state to do this, and people would assume so: you give us the money in cash in our hands and do not worry about our medical care, education, and security. We would assume security in turn; we do not want you to educate our children or treat us, just give us money in cash.

[Al-Hafiz] The Libyan population in 2025 will be 14 million people, and it would be difficult to abandon responsibility for them because there will be a new generation which will not then have taken part in this decision. What would we do to this figure?

[Al-Qadhdhafi] No, I am persuaded by the current scientific data that there is no future for North Africa, and a catastrophe is going to be announced in North Africa unless a miracle occurs with the desalination of sea water at a very low cost, so that it may be used for agriculture, and so that one may be able to irrigate the region of al-Wad for instance, or a plain, like the Plain of Jufara, with sea water. Or unless we are able to benefit from solar energy as we are doing with oil, to be able to sell and use solar energy for an income, or something of this sort; unless a miracle happens of this kind. But with the currently available water, oil, and rain quantity, and an increasing population, there will be no future in 50 years for people in North Africa. This is true not only for Libya but from Egypt to Morocco. [passage omitted: more argument by al-Qadhdhafi's interlocutors, with figures, that the suggestion to hand out 50 percent of oil income is impractical]

[Al-Qadhdhafi] It is well-known that we cannot distribute revenue equally to a family of 15 as to a family of 2, giving 10,000 to one and 10,000 to the other, because if we distribute on the basis of families it will not be a just distribution.

[Al-Hafiz] In this case, the number of family members is important in any distribution, because if the wealth is distributed, it will be distributed on a just basis to every Libyan in every family. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified speaker] The other point is direct sales—if brother citizens need to know—is how we market our oil, which is not simple. Of course, efforts, wide spheres, contacts, and companies are needed. They might know the general policy, which is that we conclude annual contracts to sell our oil with companies specialized in oil refining and distribution. Therefore, some of those companies to which we sell for cash....[changes thought] I do not know whether we need to clarify how the marketing process takes place or if you need the details.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] It is well-understood.

[Unidentified speaker] Brother leader, we would like to point out the commitments incumbent on the Jamahiriyah as of 31 December. We have commitments for, of course, importing commodities, to the tune of about 600 million dollars. We have commitments for employment for different sectors: land reclamation, strategic and light industries, electricity, transportation, information—for different sectors to the tune of about 1.5 billion dollars. We also have commitments for the transformation projects, which are worth about 1.5 billion dollars, and we have some other commitments for companies that have executed projects in the past and are currently executing projects. The sum total of our commitments is about 5 billion dollars, which we have to pay over the forthcoming period.

I also want to emphasize a point: We have paid about 5 billion dollars over the past nine months. The bank has paid about 5 billion dollars for importing either commodities or labor over the past nine months. If during nine months we have paid 5 billion dollars, then if, as we have said earlier, we set aside 5 billion dollars and distribute it—and keep the other 5 billion dollars—I do not think we would be able to meet all these commitments, and imports would decrease.

[Al-Qadhdhafi] The people can decide. We, the people, can sit and decide. We are not children, we can understand our situation correctly. We have commitments for companies for projects that we started: our factories, we buy power plants, and the great manmade river, which international companies are building. We may sometimes say: we start by repaying these things, it is necessary that we repay them. That is, a decision could be that we first repay these things, and then we start, for example....[pauses] Or we could say we start by distributing oil revenues and start by repaying these commitments by deducting them [from the oil revenue] because we know there are commitments. We say: Well, instead of 10,000, instead of deducting from the general budget, we deduct it from our budget in return for these commitments.

The second point, [words indistinct] this is an idea and not a decision. Naturally, the decision is in the hands of the people. The state—the Jamahiriyah—must have less responsibilities, and it should cut them back to the

minimum. It should relinquish the duties of the traditional state. Of course this is nothing new. This can be found in nonspecialist books—we read these books as students. [passage omitted]

The state must give up or keep to the minimum the tasks of the traditional state. I mean here that defense must not be in the (?hands of the state). [sentence as heard] [passage indistinct].

Here we have the Jamahiriyah, and here we have the militarized people. Conscription lasts 24 months. It is (?wrong) that it should continue in this way. We must double efforts in civil and scientific training. We must take it seriously in schools, universities, institutes, factories, and in all other institutions so the military service will be minimal. The more we double efforts then the less civilian service is given. Therefore, it should be confined to only three months. One should be recruited only for three months. If a war broke out or a sudden attack on the country took place, one should be ready. [passage omitted]

If a war broke out all of us would then sound the bugle and carry arms and set off. Regardless of how many—1, 2, 3, or 4 million—they all set off. Why must we stay 24 months in military service? A student who wants to graduate after five years studying engineering, or a graduate with two more years of compulsory service. [sentence as heard] It is a loss. It is also unfair. The most he should do is three or four months of compulsory service. But if we taught him when he was in preparatory or secondary school how to use weapons and if at university we taught him the other mobilization process, then in three, four, or five months he can learn other advanced things—comprehensive training, maneuvers and the rest. This process does not need 24 months. One can do national military service for three, four, or five months without pay. You do not give him anything other than 50 dinars or something like that. Even if we gave him 50 dinars for a period of three or five months, it is less than if you give pay for 24 months.

Today the Jamahiriyah, which we are talking about, does not need money for security expenditures. [passage omitted]

We must get rid of security and defense, and we must get rid of these expenses. We must even get rid of officials. If they give us 10,000 dollars or share among ourselves the oil revenue, then we do not need (?jobs). We serve as officials in order to earn the money. If you give us the money, we would thank you very much and as such we do not need the jobs. The administrative machine would be very limited, and therefore it would not need all this expenditure.

The factories and agricultural projects should have a yield, otherwise we must get rid of them. Why must we keep spending on them. Is it for propaganda? This issue must be thrashed out at the Basic People's Congress. When we hold the Basic People's Congresses, it is points like these that we have to discuss. There is no need to spend on projects that do not produce income. You say that we take from the oil revenue in order to spend on industry and agriculture. Industry and agriculture are the ones that should produce revenue for us. If not then they should go. The exception is when the project is new. [passage omitted]

Education has to become private. Any teacher can give private lessons. That would force us to teach our children at home, because school is not enough. We are not satisfied that teaching at school alone can guarantee success. We have to make sure that no house is without a private tutor giving extra paid or unpaid tuition.

We should teach our children in such a way that if I am an engineer, I should take on an apprentice and agree with him on a sum of money he can afford to pay for a service that can be useful to me. We have to do away with huge institutions such as universities and so forth. [passge omitted]

I am positive that could easily happen. If it did, the state would rid itself of the tasks of health and education, except within acceptable limits, which do not involve high costs.

The other point is that I am not satisfied with the way public money is managed. Public money is not managed the way the people and revolutionaries wish it to be. I fear there migh: be huge amounts of money spent in a fashion not compatible with God's way. It is spent neither directly on the people, who could benefit from it, nor indirectly on the projects you talk about. As a matter of fact, we have a very large octopus that is administration. If you calculate each one's portion of the budget, you will find that millions are spent....[pauses] I mean for one Libyan to buy a car for 80,000, while another Libyan could not even afford to....[pauses]. That 80,000 did not come from the sky—it came from oil. So why is there such injustice? We have to divide money evenly among the people. [passage omitted]

He who does not take part in the revolution—the simple-minded, the middleman, the no-good—are the ones to be found having made deals, made money out of the revolution, the billionaires. But we the single-minded are left out in the end, fools, dreaming about and engaging in the revolution. We the people and the revolutionaries always feel downtrodden, asking: Have we made the revolution for this simple-minded individual to benefit from it? He was against the revolution; he was a plotter who would deprive the people of all good, and now we see him as a millionaire. Where from? From the money of the people, from oil. It is known that in Libya today there is nothing to be made except from oil. Any Libyan who is now rich is rich from oil, even though he has done nothing for this oil. He has not freed this oil from the Americans, the English, or the Italians. He has not taken part in the revolution, and if something happens now in the country he would place himself in the rank of the

enemies until he hears that the battle is over and then return with documents for us to work out new specifications for his business.

I am not assured that public money is going exactly in the right direction. There is a multiplication of centers of power, of prerogatives and institutions. There are more than 200 public companies with prerogatives to their managers, employers, and other institutions. Now some institutions have merged and became communes and the game is not as easy any more. We might even do without all people outside the communes; we do not want civil servants any more.

When people, the Libyans, want a power station that costs 500 million, they have to pay 500 million and build a station, and if they do not pay then electricity will be cut off. If they say: Yes we pay, then let them set the money aside and leave it with the contractors, leave it in the bank. I want the people to sit down with these facts in front of them. This is what made me say the oil money must return to the Libyans directly so there may be no complaints any more about education, health, roads, electricity, and water supplies. In the event of cuts, then everyone should fend for themselves. [passage omitted]

Let oil money be distributed directly to all of us, and then things will become clear. Each of us will have cash in his hands, and whoever harms himself, then to hell with him, and whoever is clever and invests that money then let him become rich. See you next time. [end recording]

Iraqi Envoy Arrives With Message for al-Qadhdhafi

JN0203102193 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0930 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Tripoli, 2 Mar (INA)—Ambassador Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, President Saddam Husayn's political adviser and personal envoy to his brother Libyan President Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, arrived here last night.

Barzan al-Tikriti will relay an oral message from President Saddam Husayn to President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi.

The president's envoy was received by Jum'ah al-Fazzani, secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for unity, and Iraq's ambassador to Libya.

Barzan al-Tikriti yesterday delivered a message from President Saddam Husayn to his brother Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Nationalist Congress Urges Clinton To End Air Ban

PM0203100193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 28 Feb 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Libyan Nationalist Forces Congress Urges Clinton To Lift Air Ban"]

[Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The General Congress of the Libyan Nationalist Democratic Forces (Coordination Committee) has called on U.S. President Bill Clinton to act to end the air ban imposed on Libya by the UN Security Council to compel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to hand over the two Libyan suspects accused of complicity in the bombing of the U.S. airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988.

This came in a message addressed by the General Congress to President Clinton congratulating him on his assumption of power in the White House.

In its message the General Congress condemned all acts of terrorism which claim innocent victims, requesting the severest punishment for terrorists, but it emphasized that the party which is suffering as a result of the blockade is the Libyan people not al-Qadhdhafi's regime.

It said that the Libyan people really feel that they are being punished in the name of the international community for a crime they did not commit, and that, in their battle against al-Qadhdhafi's regime, the Libyan people have offered martyrs and suffered prison and displacement.

The General Congress emphasized that defeat of international terrorism can be achieved, not through sanctions against the Libyan people or more suffering for these people but through an urgent international trial of al-Qadhdhafi's regime under the supervision of the Security Council. It expressed willingness to provide documents and a comprehensive list of names of people involved in acts of terrorism that would incriminate the regime.

Morocco

Damascus Embassy Denies Plan on Deportees

JN0103194193 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Moroccan Embassy in Damascus has denied the reports that Morocco will host a number of Palestinian deportees as part of the so-called splitting of Resolution 799. It issued a statement today containing this denial.

Teachers Unions Issue Strike Threat

LD2702134393 Rabat MAP in English 1232 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb. 27 (MAP)—Three teacher unions presented at a press conference here their grievances which are pertaining to their financial situation and their legal situation. The three unions read out a statement listing their grievances and warned another strike will be observed in March if they are not met. A strike was observed by the teachers this February 16-17.

The teachers' grievances include better work conditions in higher education institutions, reviewing taxes levied on the teachers' salaries, better management of the social insurance and adoption of an education policy which gives to scientific research its due importance. The unions explained that the strike of February 16-17 was not launched for political reasons but to ask for the teachers' rights after the deterioration of the purchasing power of teachers warning that the absence of a mature and genuine dialogue with the authorities will lead to other strikes.

Tunisia

Iraqi Envoy Meets President, Conveys Message

Al-Tikriti on Meeting

LD0103141793 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali today received Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, Iraqi minister and political adviser to President Saddam Husayn, and personal envoy of the Iraqi president to his excellency the Tunisian president.

Following the meeting, which was attended by the ambassadors of the two countries, the Iraqi envoy made the following statement :

[Begin al-Tikriti recording] We have had the pleasure of meeting His Excellency President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, who surrounded us with his gracious generosity and hospitality. I conveyed to him a verbal message from his brother, President Saddam Husayn, on matters of mutual interest at presidential and governmental levels. [end recording]

President Affirms 'Solidarity'

JN0103165293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1344 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Tunis, 1 Mar (INA)—Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali this morning received Ambassador Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, personal envoy of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and political adviser to his excellency the president.

The envoy of his excellency the president relayed an oral message to the Tunisian president. He also conveyed to the Tunisian president the greetings of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn as well as Iraq's appreciation of Tunisia's supportive stand.

For his part, the Tunisian president expressed his sympathy for and solidarity with Iraq, particularly with regard to the embargo issue and the need for the Arab world and the international community to take this issue seriously. He also stressed the need to restore Arab solidarity so that Iraq may play its normal role on both the Arab and international scenes. The Tunisian president also asked Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti to convey his greetings to His Excellency President Saddam Husayn.

The personal envoy of his excellency the president thanked the Tunisian president for the good reception and hospitality accorded to him during his visit to Tunisia.

* Yemen-Oman Border To Open After 'Id al-Fitr

93P50071A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 24 Feb 93 pp 1, 4

[Report from Muscat by Husayn 'Abd-al-Ghani and from Sanaa by 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Haydari]

[Text] Informed sources in Muscat told AL-HAYAH yesterday that the Sultanate of Oman and Yemen will open the land border crossings and passes between them after the blessed 'Id al-Fitr [last week of March]. The two countries, which desire to develop their commercial relations, especially in the border regions, will not wait for the completion of a technical operation to demarcate the borders, a process that usually takes a long time and that requires an international specialty company.

These sources indicated that organizing the withdrawal of the two parties' forces to new positions in compliance with the border agreement may also be done after the 'Id. They also did not rule out potential operational support in demarcating borders—in compliance with the agreements that were signed in October 1992, ratified in December 1992, and placed before the Arab League and United Nations this month—to the German company that is currently responsible for demarcating the Omani-Saudi borders in accordance with the agreements signed in March 1991.

They said that there are three "natural" land crossings that will probably be opened between Oman and Yemen—Sarfayt, Habarut, and Shihan.

The same sources said that it was questionable that any of these crossings were usable as the main land route between the two countries and that each of them has advantages and disadvantages. For example, the Sarfayt crossing is the shortest route, but is rugged and difficult for trucks. The Habarut crossing leads to a very deep valley, which necessitates building bridges, increasing the estimated cost. The third crossing, Shihan, may be the most appropriate, in spite of the fact that it is longer than the others; it was moved into Yemen in compliance with the border agreement.

The sources disclosed that Oman and Yemen have agreed to build a land road between them. This agreement goes beyond previous Yemeni efforts, which were not crowned with success, although Sanaa tried to build the road with Gulf Arab or international funds.

They said that talks were conducted this week in Muscat between the ministry undersecretaries responsible for roads in the two countries. In these talks, the Yemeni side proposed a technical study of the three sites to build the road between the two states.

These sources estimated that the two sides were inclined to choose the Shihan route in spite of its length, because it will be less expensive than the Sarfayt and Habarut crossings.

They indicated that the decree that Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id issued the day before yesterday requiring the formation of a ministerial committee under the chairmanship of Qays Bin-'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Zawawi, deputy prime minister for financial and economic affairs, is concerned in part with connecting the border districts between the sultanate and Yemen. Al-Zawawi has also confirmed the establishment of a large trade center in an area north of Habarut; i.e., near Shihan. They consider these two factors to be influential in choosing the Shihan route.

They explained that this center will be the focal point for a free trade zone between the two countries in the border area through which goods having an Omani or Yemeni national origin will pass. They regard it as unlikely that the trade zone will be far from the main road between the two countries.

Since the recent meeting that was held at the level of ministry undersecretary was not authorized to discuss methods of financing this road, a meeting will be held at the ministerial level after the blessed 'Id al-Fitr, when the Yemeni construction minister visits Muscat to meet with his counterpart, Omani Communications Minister Salim Bin-'Abdallah al-Ghazali.

The sources said that the choice of a route itself may take place in two ways: the first is to make a political decision on it, and the second is to assign the subject to an international company to determine the best route. They think that the advantage of the first choice is that it would shorten the amount of time involved, which the two sides agree is important in view of their desire to speed the revitalization of economic movement, facilitate the movement of citizens, and strengthen social and tribal contacts between them.

As for solving the financing problems, the sources affirmed that the important thing is the agreement of the two countries to work together in building the road. One part of this agreement is that the participation of one country will be larger than that of the other country [as published]. If the capabilities of the two countries do not suffice to cover the costs of the road, it is possible that they will together turn to the Gulf or Arab funds, the international funds, the international commercial banks, or specific countries to provide the financing. The two countries would be able to agree between them to any of these.

In Sanaa, Engineer Anis Nasir al-Samawi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Construction and Repair—Aden Branch, described the results of his visit to the Sultanate of Oman as "positive" and said that they concentrated on preparations to sign a cooperation agreement between the two neighboring countries to provide for connecting them with a modern network of roads.

Al-Samawi said that he had just finished meetings and discussions with officials in Muscat on all of the technical matters connected with preparing studies and plans

for these roads, which will be implemented—it is expected—directly after the studies are completed.

He added that a technical team from the two countries will participate in determining the expected routes of the roads to be implemented by commissioning consulting companies to make the necessary engineering drawings under the supervision of road specialists in the two countries.

Oman

Bonds Issued To Finance Budget Deficit

NC2802094993 Paris AFP in English 0925 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 28 (AFP)—Oman has issued development bonds for the eighth time to finance its budget deficit caused by falling oil prices, the Omani central bank said.

It said the bonds, with a value of 20 million riyals (52 million dollars), were open for investors from any country and the minimum price was 10 riyals (26 dollars) each.

The bonds can yield between seven and eight percent every six months, the central bank said Saturday.

Oman began to issue bonds in the mid-1980s when oil prices started to decline. Other oil producers in the Gulf have also been hit by deficits and resorted to domestic borrowing.

The 1993 budget had a deficit of 715 million dollars and officials said it would also be financed by withdrawal from the state reserve fund, set up from oil revenues.

Oman produces about 750,000 barrels per day and plans to keep the same oil output for 10 years.

Relations With Czech Republic Established 1 Mar

JN0103164993 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Excerpt] The Sultanate of Oman and the Czech Republic have decided to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassador level as of today. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Source Says OPEC Oil Output Quota Observed

JN0103181693 Manama WAKH in English 1545 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Doha, March 1 (GNA)—Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) today implemented the oil output quota decreed by the recent OPEC ministerial meeting, amounting to 364,000 barrels per day, an authoritative QGPC source said.

In a statement to QATAR NEWS AGENCY, the same source said QGPC had informed its clients of cuts ranging from 10 to 14 percent on their allocations for March. The allocations were made before the new OPEC ceiling was agreed in Vienna.

The source expressed conviction that adherance to the new OPEC ceiling would improve oil prices which have already gained one US dollar per barrel since the agreement was reached on Feb. 13th.

Yemen

Minister Interviewed on Oil Discovery, Production

JN0103193893 Al-Shariqah AL-SHURUQ in Arabic 25 Feb 93 pp 6, 7

[Excerpts] Paris—Oil is no longer a mere promise in Yemen; it has become a tangible fact and will be the balance factor in the national economy. [passage omitted]

AL-SHURUQ has held a dialogue with Salih Abu-Bakr Husaynun, Yemeni oil and mineral resources minister, concerning a host of questions on the Yemeni citizens' minds with regard to the situation of oil and gas and their role in development. [passage omitted]

Replying to a question on Yemen's current benefit from oil wealth, Husaynun said: The current production from some oil fields in the Ma'rib Province covers domestic consumption and the surplus is exported. This oil is of good quality and is devoid of acids and sulphur, which is very much desired in the internatinal market. Our estimates indicate that in September oil production will total 300,000-350,000 barrels a day after we begin to pump oil from the al-Masilah oil field in the Hadramawt Province, which is a concession zone for the Canadian Oxy Company. Last year's estimates for the reserves in this oil field totaled approximately 500 million barrels. The new studies, however, have confirmed that the real reserves are 1.06 billion barrels.

The Yemeni minister added: Of course, the oil thus far discovered is not the entire oil present because the oil exploration zones are limited and there is a possibility for further oil discoveries. Some 30 world companies are now operating in Yemen and there are new offers from a number of companies. However, we are following a clear policy in this regard, which will maintain some balance. We prefer not to mortgage our wealth to a single company, and we seek to distribute the concessions and exploration zones among several companies. This method has thus far yielded positive results in terms of our relations with the United States, Canada, Western Europe, and the Arab and Asian countries to which we have extended our hand in order to set up investment projects and benefit from their great economic experience, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia. The importance of the relationship with this region's states will increase with the large gas discoveries in our country. As

much as we seek to diversify the sources of investment, experience, and capital, we also work to diversify the markets according to both our long-term needs and our view of the economic groups close to the end of this century and also in light of the emerging regional economic systems.

Asked about gas investments, Husaynun said: Gas quantities are large and are thus far estimated at 15 trillion [not further identified] and are continuously rising. This quantity of gas will provide easy investment and enable the building of power plants. We are now discussing investment with Hunt Oil Company and Exxon Corporation because the oil discoveries lie in their concession zones in the Ma'rib area. We expect to reach settlements with these two companies, but if this fails we will initiate a dialogue with other companies which have submitted requests, including ones which have good reputation and great experience in this field. [passage omitted]

* Ruling Parties Decide To Merge in Principle

93AE0359A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Feb 93 pp 1, 4

[Article by 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Haydari: "'Ali Salih: Two Parties Have Approved Merger in Principle"]

[Text] Sanaa—Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, the Yemeni Presidential Council chairman, has asserted that Yemen's two ruling parties, the General People's Congress [GPC] and the Yemen Socialist Party [YSP], have agreed to their merger in principle.

Salih has pointed out that a political committee from the two parties is "discussing the method for the merger. Both parties have approved the merger in principle. What remains is the mechanism and whether the merger is to take place before or after the elections. Ultimately, the inclination is toward merger, whether before or after the elections. Both the YSP and the GPC have agreed on this merger because it serves the supreme national interest. The citizens are for a YSP-GPC merger. Even if they do not agree now, they will agree later because it is in the best interest of the country."

Salih expressed the belief that "the elections are not for the parties, contrary to the understanding of some of them. They are for the Yemeni people, with all their political organizations and parties and their broad masses. The parties are a part of the people. There is an overwhelming majority of the people whose only allegiance is to the country and who do not belong to any political party. The elections are general and for everybody. The citizens have to elect the qualified and upright individual who is known for his loyalty and capability, because this selection will reflect on the other state agencies."

With these statements, 'Ali Salih was responding to questions by AL-JUMHURIYAH, a government daily issued in Ta'izz, on the parties' role and on the extent of their response in the initial phase of the elections, namely the phase of voter registration.

In Aden, Sultan al-Sami'i, a Chamber of Deputies member representing Ta'izz Governorate, has said that he was wounded in an attempt on his life last Tuesday, thus denying a statement by a security source broadcast by Sanaa Television that said that the deputy's supporters killed two members of a military police patrol that was checking weapons permits.

Al-Sami'i, who has been in hiding since the incident, has said in a statement published by SAWT AL-'UMMAL, the publication of the Central Council of the Federation of Labor Unions, which is close to the YSP, that the military police patrol that intercepted his motorcade at the entrance to Ta'izz "ordered him to accompany it to its station in the city on the pretext that the weapon permit he presented to it was signed by the interior minister and that it needed the approval of the military police commander."

Al-Sami'i added that upon reaching the station with his escorts, police elements opened fire in his direction, that he and one of his escorts were wounded. He also said that his car broke down and that his escorts were thus compelled to return the fire, killing two policemen.

He pointed out that he is not in hiding "to escape justice," and he appealed to the Yemeni public to "secure for him and for his case neutral parties to conduct the investigation and to expose the truth so that justice may take its course."

Al-Tikriti on Opposition, Internal Politics

JN2702084993 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 23 Feb 93 pp 4, 2

[Article by Barzan al-Tikriti, political adviser to President Saddam Husayn, written in mid-November 1992: "A Bit of Reality"]

[Text] Leafing through some of my personal papers, including a string of articles written by Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal in the early eighties about the Arab, and especially the Egyptian state of affairs, I was intrigued by certain ideas which I compared to our present state of affairs and the beginnings of friction among various political forces in Iraq—if political is the correct word—including those who are abroad waiting for the system of government to crumble under the weight of outside and Western action so they can take over. In actual fact, this way of thinking and psychological state of mind is quite alien to the Iraqi way of thinking, and, effectively, from politics in Iraq. This way of thinking is so bad that it is worth taking a hard look at, since it has no parallel in any of the newly emerged nations that lack experience with national opposition. I have met with veritable opponents who drew a line between their country's government and the country itself and their people. Strangely enough, the Iraqi opposition has broken all moral and psychological barriers and gone about knocking on the doors of foreign ministries and intelligence services in the West to argue their case for rapid action to bring down the system of government in Iraq so they can take over. This kind of conduct is virtually the coup de grace that disqualifies them as patriots. Atypical of traditional political activity, both in Iraq and other countries, such conduct leaves me baffled.

I can make no sense of it, and certainly find it without justification. I can only warn such people and tell them this: The way you are going can only hurt Iraq and the country's geographic and demographic integrity in that it provides cover for foreign powers to meddle in Iraq's internal affairs before finally dismembering it. I would also tell them that if this scenario should come to pass, they would be spared neither by history nor by future generations. If the opposition is unaware of this fact, this is tragic; and if it is, this is even more tragic.

The self-styled opposition is, as I see it, playing with fire—something too costly for the Iraqi people and territory, and indeed for the entire region, to afford. This introduction may serve as a signal, but, for the moment, it is sufficient to help me define a few points and clarify the framework.

At the outset, it is useful to agree on a general and important principle; namely, that every decision is a policy and every policy is a decision, as Professor Haykal put it, particularly since any decision on national security is indeed a policy. The same holds true for economic and cultural affairs, and even for services.

The argument that every policy is a decision is quite clear. Politics is not an eternal dialogue. It is a decision made by someone who holds authority during a particular stage. It is generally recognized that the political nature of any decision does not lie in its content or aim; it goes beyond that and reaches its mode of existence. This includes the way it is drafted and issued, as well as the way it is made public. The political decision often affects people's feelings and sometimes their conscience, especially since the decision projects to the people the opinion and vision of decisionmakers with regard to problems and issues they address. Besides, the mode of a decision reflects what decisionmakers think of the people, their way of approaching them, and the degree of respect for, and dependence on, them.

As for Iraq, it is fair to note that its current decisionmaking, in light of prevailing circumstances, is rather complicated. This is unfamiliar for the policy of the Middle East and the Arab world. The fact is that the Iraq problem is absolutely unfamiliar, in terms of its size and the way it is handled. It is indeed a new and strange battle and problem, especially since the decisionmakers cannot possibly ignore what happened after the U.S.-Iraqi war. It should be noted that part of what happened was beyond the will and power of the decisionmakers.

I can imagine the heavy burden and responsibility shouldered by those who assist the decisionmakers. Sometimes, these assistants find themselves facing a dead end. They look for a way out, but do not find one. I am saying this to be fair, and also to show the inherent difficulty of political decisionmaking. I should add that whoever willingly accepts a position of responsibility should bear its burdens and face his responsibilities bravely, wisely, patiently, and faithfully. There is nothing he can do other than bear its honor and remain faithful to its trust. Thank God because those who have won the honor of responsibility are still shouldering it. They have not despaired, nor have they run out of patience. This is important and necessary for conducting any battle, especially a battle like the one Iraq is waging.

As is already known, Iraq—just like other Third World nations—has experienced peculiar stages of development. Thus, unlike other parts of the world, Third World countries have not passed through the circumstances which would enable people to develop mentally, economically, and socially in a quiet, studied, scientific, and gradual manner.

Although leaps have occurred in people's material status, this has not been accompanied by equivalent leaps in their mental makeup, neither in scientific nor in professional domains. Personally, I am not for leaps in any sector and in any direction. This is because such leaps have known negative effects. Here, I recall the wisdom of Imam 'Ali, may God be pleased with him, when he said: "He who seeks glory through false means, truly lives in humiliation." Among such negative effects is that the majority would turn into first- rate consumers, while their productivity remains low. They would also tend to

seek huge profits through quick and easy ways. All these are diseases which could lead to economic and social collapse when society faces its first crisis. This is because people have not experienced a full cycle of development.

At the same time, we find that circumstances have not allowed the emergence of genuine, specialized experts in all fields. Neither have such circumstances made it possible for constitutional institutions to develop, and consequently to establish administrative and technical institutions in various sectors in such a manner that helps entrench their specialization and operations. However, we have noticed and felt that what is allowed by circumstances in Third World nations, or let us say in most of them, is for political groups to appear and lead national action to achieve a type of independence, a form of statehood, and some degree of noneconomic development. I say noneconomic because of the failure to adopt economic studies, or what is called in economic literature comprehensive "economic feasibility." Add to this another factor, which is the tendency to act hurriedly to establish political clout, or because of the urgent need to expedite the establishment of some links of development and completing them as soon as possible. As for democracy, it has its own psychological and practical circumstances which depend on the background of the decisionmakers. In most cases, only formalities and outside manifestations are seen. In fact, this is not as bad as a step along the road to your target.

Here in Iraq, there are two political teams or groups, if I may say so. Currently, it is difficult to describe one of the two parties as political, in light of the distortion resulting from the paths it has followed. Nevertheless, let us refer to it as such. The first group has come to power, having diagnosed the deteriorating situation and the need to deal with it through a revolution to come to power and rectify matters. This group is represented by the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

I can truly say, not because I am a devout Ba'thist—I also believe that the Ba'thist creed must be developed, making it familiar with everything new in the world—that the Ba'thist creed has been bold in leading the country. It realized victories on the domestic and economic levels after the nationalization of foreign oil companies. It realized less on the other levels. This was proved correct after much has changed in the world, including in our region and homeland. Therefore, it appeared that what was realized 20 years ago is incapable of keeping pace with current developments. Therefore, it is necessary at the appropriate opportunity to reconsider issues that no longer keep pace with what is happening today, be it economic or political, internal or external. Reconsideration should also be extended to the field of personal freedoms, the press, a multiparty system, and participation.

The party believes that the national administration is a right and a responsibility for whoever is capable and qualified to participate in this administration to reach the phase of decisionmaking on the domestic and foreign levels, especially since our people comprise more than one nationality and more than one religion. Others will not approve of one particular group making decisions. They would like to discuss this decision before it is made because it affects their homeland and interests, as well as what they represent.

There remains the indisputable fact that the majority of Iraqis are Arabs. Still, 15-20 percent of the population is Kurdish or from other groups. How can I, as an Arab, make a decision to fight Israel, for instance, without discussing this decision with those who are my partners in this homeland, who will suffer economically and psychologically because of my decision, and who will offer martyrs in the process?

The second group that I have already mentioned bear the responsibility of expressing various ideas. In the Third World, problems and issues are similar, as are modes of thinking. Therefore, each group represents particular interests. It is clear which one represents the more just and more principled, and hence more patriotic, interests, irrespective of the methods employed to reach that end.

Still, the fact remains that the foundation upon which all these parties stand is not clear. For instance, here in Iraq I do not believe that the second group can be certain in its judgment on what the Ba'th Party, which is leading all aspects of life in Iraq, truly represents. It cannot define the number of its supporters among the Iraqi people. The same applies to other parties as well, be they from those who work openly or in underground parties. These other parties are suffering because of the fact that the masses do not know their positions, their ideology, and their wide visions for the future. At the same time, others hesitate. They are afraid to support these parties and political groups, especially the religious ones and the others that take a secessionist path because of their methods and their domestic and foreign contacts. As for the Ba'th Party, it is now, under the current circumstances, known to the Iraqi and Arab people much more than before. Of course, there are certain observations, but they are not substantive given the fact that they are neither secessionist nor fundamentalist in nature, bent on setting life back 1,000 years. [sentence as published]

Aside from this, I view all other matters as being easy. An understanding and a solution for them can be reached, even if it is a compromise solution. A compromise solution between those concerned in all aspects of life on the one hand, and the Ba'th Party and its policy and the way it views life on the other, is often good. We notice that matters are distributed between the two parties. One party has the power to make decisions and carry out actions, irrespective of remarks made by the other. Meanwhile, the other party tries to portray itself as the reacting party. It tries to draw the curtain over its course and contacts, and whatever cover these can give to others, in order to interfere in the details of the Iraqi people's political life and its other aspects, on the basis of secessionist or sectarian motives.

In other words, the party that is in office is the one which has the decisionmaking power, and the other party is the one that argues with it with the purpose of exploiting its mistakes to win the majority over to its side.

What we notice is that the other party does not discuss, contest, or oppose the political decision that the first party, which assumes power, makes in a correct and known manner which is acknowledged by all opposition forces in the world. What takes place is that this party not only rejects any Iraqi political decision but also attacks it. What is more serious is their recourse to foreign forces and their putting themselves in foreign hands to have these forces bring pressure to bear on the regime to topple it, without any consideration for what will happen to the Iraqi territory and people. From this premise, such a stand and approach are unacceptable. I hesitate to use disparaging terms against any person, but, unfortunately the term "cheap agentry" is the only one that applies to this type of opposition.

I do not want to put myself in the place of the opposition because its approach is not that which is agreed upon by the nationalist majority or even minority. What I want to say is that this opposition must sever its relations with foreign forces and submit national alternatives acceptable to the decisionmaking center.

The existing situation is the result of the groups in power which make decisions and which should be responsible for the running of the country. The nature of authority in the entire Third World places all the facts on which a decision is based in the hands of the authorities. Other parties can only guess or come to know parts of the truth from what they can pick up here and there. In spite of this, the opposition can submit alternatives to the decisionmaking center to redress things and make them easy for all the parties, including the welfare of the people and the homeland. Anything else is unacceptable and rejected.

From what I see and sense, I can say the only momentous threats posed to Iraq come from inside and from the exacerbation of the problems resulting from the foreigner's interference in our domestic affairs. It is obvious that there are parties which harbor evil intentions toward Iraq and conspire against Iraq's presence in terms of the unity of its people, its territorial integrity, and its relations, first with its neighbors, the Arabs, and then with the world which has interests in Iraq and the region, in the same manner that Iraq and other countries in the region have interests in other parts of the world. This is normal and becomes more so when we seek a formula for coexistence and understanding, and for joint interests with this world which now resembles a small village. However, I believe that the tackling of all these problems should not be made in a general manner, but in a specialized manner and on a case-by- case basis. This is the soundest approach to explain the facts and their background to all, who can then announce their judgment on these facts or condemn them through policy and law.

I can assert that most of the groups in Iraq are aware of its state of affairs and difficulties. They also predict the developments which could harm Iraq if they continue on their current course. Then, when things go wrong, regret will be useless and the excuse that some elements might have made mistakes because of incorrect views or assessments will not be accepted. Incorrect assessments and views cannot be accepted since this will have a negative effect on the homeland's interests, sovereignty, and future. If this is the case, what will the situation be like when the homeland's existence is threatened?

I can also say that the opposition groups are not serious in practicing the game of democracy, which they underscore, for many reasons.

They know full well that the foreign forces, on which they rely, reject the full practice of democracy in Third World countries, particularly in Iraq because of its importance and social structure.

For many reasons, the opposition is incapable—in fact incompetent—of attracting the majority to their ranks. One of these reasons is that opposition elements have become alien to the Iraqi people and their mode of thinking. Consequently, they do not know, and cannot sense, the Iraqi people's aspirations. This means that the opposition is incapable of moving the majority to their side so they can assume power. At the same time, the opposition is waiting for the United States to topple the Iraqi regime and to hand them the reins of power. It has become clear that the United States has failed to achieve this, and the United States itself admitted, through its officials, that the downfall of the regime can only be achieved from inside Iraq. It has also become clear that the internal front is coherent and rallies around its leadership out of its awareness of what is being concocted against its homeland.

This is in addition to another reason that was known in the past, and which is still valid in one way or another; namely, the person I know is better than the one I don't know. This applies both inside and outside Iraq.

As a result of the opposition's acts, America washed its hands of it, because it knows that it is impossible for Iraq to be ruled by a person or group who assumes power by way of U.S. influence or that of any other foreign party.

Therefore, I say that the opposition's ambitions should not extend beyond having, in the near future, a voice or an accepted and reasonable role of participation, after its ties with foreign forces are severed and after it becomes a real national opposition. Through this alone, the opposition can have a role or influence, in one way or another, in decisionmaking. Furthermore, with regard to our Kurdish brothers, they will enjoy a relaxed and good situation in all aspects, in a manner that meets their demands and maintains Iraq's geographical and political unity. This will take place, in accordance with the developments that took place in this world, by developing an autonomy that meets the Kurds' legitimate aspirations and rights. The authorities and the Ba'th

Party should accept this aspiration and provide special impetus to its implementation. I do not believe that anything beyond this will be possible or acceptable, either inside or outside Iraq.

I can say that there are no dangers threatening Iraq except from within because I, without claiming profound knowledge, know Iraq's ancient history. I can even say that ever since Iraq's independence, there has been something similar to a written contract between the peasant and merchant, and even the religious institution and the ruler, as is the case in some other countries in the region. This contract between the various parties says: "Leave me alone to manage my affairs in a manner that serves me and others peacefully and legally, and you can do whatever you want in the capital city and official headquarters of the state, away from me and without an official authorization from me." However, the situation changed dramatically following the Persians' interference in our policy and society. The Turks also interfered in the same manner and for the same purpose. Added to this important factor was the migration from rural to urban areas which followed the promulgation of agricultural reform following the Iraqi regime's structural change in 1958. Moreover, the state interfered in domestic and foreign trade and began to supervise even the most minute detail in all sectors. Accordingly, this contract was disturbed and the agreement was breached. We must not forget that breaching the terms of a contract has always been a bad omen and has harmed the interests of the majority, particularly the influential links within society, which resulted in their moving in various directions and not in the interest of all.

Now, however, we find that all the circumstances have changed. The people, who numbered 6 million in 1958, now total almost 18 million. Since the 1958 revolution, the people have not lived a comfortable epoch, in the full sense of the word, except for fewer than five years between 1975 and 1980. After that, living conditions were, to a certain extent, good. Therefore, leaving the capital city alone was difficult. Concurrently, the people could not leave the government to decide what it wanted in the capital. Year after year, inhabitants from the rural areas began to creep into the city in search of livelihood and, consequently, a new contract. Accordingly, the city began to connect the people with other cities, as well as beyond; across borders, seas, and oceans. We finally reached the stage of the world becoming one universal city enjoying the same rights and demands, and cherishing the same hopes and aspirations.

If we say this is the situation of others, we should not forget that Iraq is a special case. It is situated in the heart of the world and, consequently, at the heart of its interactions. This is good if there is vigilance as well as caution, as referred to in literature and the terminology of military science.

One notices that these days, as well as in the past, there has been a wariness to make political decisions. I can guess the reason from what I hear from various parties and the ideas and claims made by the opposition, which differ from those stated by other parties in and outside Iraq which enjoy a mature and pan-Arab approach. In my opinion, this is the case because there is a feeling that the current circumstances represent a period of transition between an historical project, supported by many inside and outside Iraq but which did not succeed in view of the conspiracies of the West and others in the region, and another historical project, the dimensions and lines of which, as yet, have not been completely defined or identified. Another reason, which we previously mentioned, is the attempt by many to confuse the cards and magnify the mistakes without studying the causes and the circumstances which have brought us to where we are today. In other words, some want to attain their goals by blaming and censuring others; by just sitting on top of the hill as onlookers waiting for something to happen. It would be better for them if they voice their criticism from within and that their criticism be constructive and seek to safeguard, if only, common interests. Yes, there has been an historical project on the national and pan-Arab level. Because such a project existed, we saw what happened. However, the historical project still exists. Concern for it is more enhanced. Still, there should be priorities for the reconstruction of the Iraqi house, for having the sons living under its roof enjoy equal rights and have the same duties, and have them show the same concern and love for their homeland. At the same time, these priorities should reward the Iraqi who has dedicated himself to the service of his nation and others.

Therefore, there is no reason to worry about the historical project. It exists. We should keep in mind that active nations survive because they have a date with history. Any nation can consolidate an historical project after it renders it a success. Any nation can also lose an historical project. Then, it must formulate a substitute. This is the case with the Iraqis. However, the transition period between the stage of a lost project and that of the formulation of a new project remains one of the most difficult. However, this does not exactly apply to us.

From this premise, I would like to affirm that Iraq fares well because its heart, spirit, and determination are sound. Confirmation of what I say lies in the state of constant search for solutions to problems and for outlets and inlets from the midst of hardship. What is important is that while all the Iraqi people are busy, they are not satisfied with their present state of affairs. Thus, this state of affairs, and the Iraqi people's rejection of it, is the guarantee that a better future will be sought, something that will contribute to the formulation and implementation of the new project.

In short, our present state of affairs in Iraq is like an army which has no tanks with which to storm its targets and no aircraft to transport it to faraway places. But, it is an army which has antitank guns to prevent others from storming its lines; it is an army on the defensive which cannot now proceed to its targets, or fulfill its objectives, but which remains an army capable of defending itself.

This is something good at the present time. In spite of this state of affairs, there are problems in Iraq and we are not satisfied with our general state of affairs.

What we have now is less than we deserve or possess. The important thing, however, is that we should not surrender to the siege or illusions. At the same time, fear should not rattle our hearts before its real causes attack us. Even in this case, we must think to manage things and avoid fear. Despite what has happened to us, we are still alive and know the value of an honorable and decent life.

We will return now to the historical project which we mentioned earlier. The historical project of any homeland is its higher strategy. If we look at some countries in the world to form an idea of their strategy by knowing their historical projects, we will notice, for example, that the strategy of the United States precisely reflects its geography, particularly after the States expanded from the east to the west of the continent. This strategy shows how the United States can maintain large-scale influence in international policy to guarantee its interests and control over the world, provided that it can shoulder the burden of all that. In addition, the United States is committed to supporting Israel and safeguarding its security and existence, as well as controlling oil sources to ensure cheap and easy oil shipments to the U.S. market.

Let us take another example. India is the continent of ethics, sects, religions, and languages. In light of these special characteristics, we notice that India's higher strategy is unification and union by way of development and science. In addition, there should always be a high and lasting readiness to resist any separatist attempts.

If we take Israel as a third example, we will find that its high strategy calls for encouraging continuous immigration to Israel and continuous expansion. It depends on foreign forces for this, particularly Britain and France on some occasions, and America always. Meanwhile, it maintains its military superiority over the Arabs.

Therefore, I say that Iraq's historical project should be represented by maintaining Iraq's geographical and social unity by way of unification, merging, development, and national education. In addition, rights and duties should be clear and understood, the Iraqi citizen's present and future condition should be looked after, and all the Iraqi people's daily needs should be made available. We must not forget Iraq's neighboring countries because, first, they are foreign countries; second, they have historical and transient ambitions in Iraq; and third, they have deep-rooted and vengeful conflicts with pan-Arabism. Each one of them also has its own strategy which, when implemented, will certainly be at the expense of Iraq's strategy.

Therefore, looking after the Iraqi citizen and promoting his sense of national awareness and love for the homeland as a result of the dignified and secure life he is living, represent the best reply to the dangers surrounding us as a result of our geographic location and historical role in humanitarian life and Arab civilization. This is considered a practical and scientific reply to the deteriorating situation in the region, which includes the peninsula and Greater Syria, which were divided by colonialism. Upon examining the map drawn up by colonialism, we find that Baghdad and Damascus, and later the Arabian Peninsula and its coasts on the Gulf, with Riyadh as its center of influence, were left to fight for influence in Greater Syria. Colonialism also turned Kuwait into a thorn in the eye of Riyadh and an element of disturbance and trouble against its policy. In northern Africa as well, struggle for influence is continuing between Algiers and Rabat. In the Nile Valley region, Egypt is preoccupied with Sudan and vice versa. In addition to preoccupying the region with its own affairs, the scheme had a still more important target represented by the region's preoccupation with new conflicts within or at its borders, all with the aim of preventing the emergence of an influential power in this region or at its border. Thus, an eight-year war was imposed on Iraq. That war exhausted Iraq's economy and claimed the lives of some of its best men. It was Iraq's pan-Arab, national, and geographic significance which made it wage a grinding war for a long period of time in defense of its present and future, as well as the safety of several other states facing the Iranian danger. It was the same scheme which preoccupied Syria with communal, sectarian, and even familial retaliations in Lebanon. Saudi Arabia is in trouble because of its border and economic problems with Yemen, in addition to the Yemeni people's feelings that their economic situation could be better if the sisterly neighbor understood these problems and viewed their rights reasonably.

As for the situation in the Arab Maghreb, it is not reassuring because of the feelings of suspicion and uneasiness between Morocco and Algeria. This began with the problem of the Sahara and we do not know where this problem will end. There is also an atmosphere of civil war in Sudan, in addition to the problem of Hala'ib with Egypt. This problem is like a time bomb which may explode any minute. Nobody can estimate the degree of damage this bomb will cause or what would be the results and psychological impact of such an explosion on the two countries and the Arab region.

Since the end of the seventies, specifically when al-Sadat visited Jerusalem, the Arab countries have been stumbling. Some of them began to act independently, the way they wished because they sensed a split in Arab ranks and a disunity of Arab positions following al-Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. All this happened in spite of the Baghdad summit conference, which was considered a reply to that visit and that unilateral decision—a decision motivated by delusions and unrealistic dreams.

When the huge Arab oil revenues began to flow in, some elements and governments took it upon themselves to squander that wealth in much the same way desert sand flows out from between one's fingers, leaving nothing behind.

Over the past 10 years, the Arab countries' oil revenues have been estimated at $250 billion a year. This wealth has not been available before, not even to the major empires throughout history. When they established their state, the Ommiads did not have such potentials. The same goes for the Abbasids when they established their state. These revenues are far greater than what was available to Great Britain when it established its empire on which the sun was said to never set. Black gold has come and gone without the Arabs having established either an empire similar to that of their predecessors the Ommiads and the Abbasids, or an industrial base and empire as Great Britain had done with the resources it plundered from its colonies. Where has all this surplus from the black gold gone? Most people do not know the answer to this for various reasons. Among these reasons is that these people are ignorant and because they are only interested in their own lives and problems. Another reason is that some of these people have simply grabbed whatever was within their reach. If one wants to know for certain, one has to go back to the records to see who made the decisions that were put down in these records.

Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal says that he read about these figures for the first time in a CIA report, which was later published within a study at Harvard University by professor Nadav Safran. The figures to which I refer show that the annual defense budget of one Gulf state equals the defense budgets of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Israel combined!!! Still, with these defense budgets the five countries combined had 60 divisions, 10,000 tanks, and 2,000 warplanes, while the Gulf country in question had only 5 regiments, 500 tanks, and 200 planes with the small overall budget.

The same thing applies to another Gulf country. Its defense budget totalled $2 billion a year, and it had an army of 25,000 soldiers while Pakistan, which had a smaller budget by $200 million, had an army of 647,000 soldiers.

Urgent and difficult problems have now emerged. Postponing, delaying, or ignoring their solution is of no benefit. On the contrary, this will exacerbate these problems and make them more complicated.

Complicated and bitter economic facts now exist in the Arab countries and they have dire consequences. It will be difficult to tackle these facts, even if they are deftly handled.

Arranging matters and finding solutions to these problems need men, efficiency, and vision. Efficiency comes from specialization and experience. The existence of men along with efficiency and the sense of responsibility will solve some problems, and we can find solutions to the other problems because, in my view, neither efficiency nor courage alone to make a decision can realize anything or solve problems.

Therefore, establishing a relationship between efficiency that comes from clear vision and specialization on the one hand and courage to make decisions on the other is important and necessary. I say that matters cannot proceed smoothly and usefully now and in the future unless there is an interaction between efficiency and courage to make decisions.

But some of the men who occupy posts and participate in decisionmaking are exhausted by long service. Others are like second-hand motor vehicles; no one knows what they did or what was done to them, let alone the distances they covered and the conditions of their speedometers, which may have been tampered with. Thus, decisionmaking needs men.

Most of those men who are well known are exhausted, and most of the new men are unknown. Therefore, any wagering on the latter is like a strike of luck. But at the same time, they are important and necessary because the mature of matters and the Arab nation need new men from a generation which will rightfully and necessarily shoulder the responsibilities of its age and homeland. We also may say that the state's executive organ entrusted to implement the decision is also exhausted by experience, laws, and the difference between the past and the present. What is worse is that they are accustomed to obeying the authorities and their representatives and not carrying out clear policies and central plans with general principles and goals.

Then the factors of corruption permeated this organ, including the impossibility of reconciliation between the growing cost of living and salaries, which cannot meet the living needs in this difficult period. Moreover, the overall climate is replete with temptation, which dazzles the eye and which will later affect the mind and the conscience.

Finally, I can say that everyone works without an archive, or more correctly, without a memory.

We have gotten rid of all our past experiences. Our near history consists of three eras: An era which we have neglected, an era which we have attacked, and an era which we want to forget. In light of this, I can say that decisionmaking appears to be difficult as a result of the current circumstances and the mode of action. Therefore, decisionmaking appears to be a reaction because the roots of the issues are absent. This represents only half of what should be now and not all of what should be because what is needed now is a reaction resulting from sound planning and information and a sound analysis of this information.

Old experiences contain elements that can be neglected or criticized and some other elements that should be forgotten. But these experiences remain important because they contain the roots and branches of matters, as expressed by the administrative sciences as "priorities". What is strange is that the Arabs forget their history while others take advantage of it.

Babil 'Ridiculed' U.S.-Sponsored Mideast Settlement

JN2802135093 Baghdad INA in English 1312 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, Feb 28, INA—BABIL paper has said that the principle of linkage between the application of the UN resolutions on Kuwait and its resolutions on the Palestinian question is the Arab reply to the imperialist-Zionist linkage between oil and Israel's security on one side and the oil and the U.S. security and the Arabs on the other.

The paper ridiculed in its article for today illusions of the U.S. stooges and their fragile opinions that the settlement is about to be achieved under supervision of the United States to engineer the democracy and human rights.

Egyptian Regime Blamed for Unrest, Cairo Explosion

JN2802111393 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2125 GMT 27 Feb 93

[From the "Spotlight on the News" feature]

[Text] News agencies yesterday carried details of the explosion in central Cairo which caused the death of a number of people. Egyptian sources described it as a serious development and a turning point in the behavior of the extremists. The following is a report on this subject read by [name indistinct].

Political observers say that the economic, political, and social conditions in Egypt have deteriorated in an unprecedented manner because the Egyptian administration is moving with obvious confusion on both the domestic and foreign levels.

Corruption, nepotism, and bribes in the administrative bodies are rife. Political analysts explain these phenomena as a tragic result of the practices of the Egyptian political leadership which ignored the Egyptian people's interests and national aspirations for freedom, democracy, and Arab solidarity.

The Egyptian people's reaction has been marked by confronting the regime's repressive apparatus, demonstrating, and issuing pamphlets exposing the regime's crimes. The Egyptian regime's response to the people's opposition was not in the form of reforms and solution of problems plaguing the Egyptian citizens but in the form of wide- scale arrests and torture in jails and daily harassment of Egyptian citizens. As a result of these repressive methods, many areas in Egypt witnessed violent confrontations between the Egyptian citizens and the security forces followed by a series of explosions in buses carrying foreign tourists, especially Israelis, for whom the regime has opened all doors so they can spy on the Egyptian Armed Forces and the Egyptian political and economic conditions.

An Israeli tourist said in this regard: We are moving about in Egypt and are seeing the most delicate military and political information with complete freedom compared only to the freedom of researchers who are given the opportunity to see top-secret documents.

On another level, the Western and Zionist media always praise the president of the Egyptian regime, regarding him as one of the most loyal friends of the United States and Zionism. The Egyptian people have described him as an enemy of Egypt, a terrorist with unparalleled hostility toward the Egyptian people. They say that his statements are deceptive, and that he has never honored his pledges. In their utterancess and publications, the people say that Egypt is now seething with anger under the Mubarak regime.

Many political observers commented on the latest explosion by saying that it constitutes a great challenge to the regime and a clear indication that Egypt is at the threshold of a new wave of violence because the people can no longer tolerate the deteriorating economic conditions and terrorist practices against all the free men who want a free, decent life and a free pan-Arab policy serving the supreme pan-Arab interests.

Iranian Cease-Fire Violations Protested to UN

JN0103200193 Baghdad INA in English 1850 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] United Nations, Mar 1, INA—Iraq has officially informed the United Nations of the new Iranian breachings of the ceasefire provisions and conditions of the buffer zone between the two sides.

This came in a letter sent by Iraq's permanent delegate to the United Nations Nizar Hamdun to Dr. Butrus Ghali secretary general of the international organization.

The letter said that an Iranian helicopter land on Feb. 8 near al-Tamim observation post before taking off toward the Iranian depth, while another helicopter flew over the Iraqi Army units on Jan 24, on low altitude.

'Violation' of Airspace Reported to Arab League

JN0103124093 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0815 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 1 Mar (INA)—Iraq has filed a new protest with the Arab League over the continuing violation of Iraqi airspace by U.S., British, and French aircrafat taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

A letter from Iraq's Arab League delegate to secretary general 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid also notes that the violations constitute a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty and national unity.

On Thursday and Friday, 25 and 26 February, American, British, and French aircraft taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait mounted 91 sorties, the letter observed.

43 Allied Air Sorties on 24 Feb Protested To Arab League

JN2802123193 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1025 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 28 Feb (INA)—Iraq yesterday protested the continued violations of its airspace by U.S., British, and French aircraft, which took off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, noting that these violations pose threats to its security, sovereignty, and national unity.

In a letter addressed to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, the Iraqi permanent representative to the Arab League said that these aircraft conducted 43 hostile air sorties over Iraqi territory on 24 February, thus violating Iraq's airspace and posing threats to its security, sovereignty, and national unity.

The Iraqi delegate requested that this letter be circulated among members of the Arab League.

Gaza Closed Indefinitely After Knifings in Tel Aviv

Rabin Skeptical on Closing

TA0103163993 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin today discussed what could be done to stem the wave of murderous terrorist attacks. Rabin said that there was no point in closing off the territories in reaction to today's attack in Tel Aviv because that would not stop terrorist activity. Addressing the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the prime minister asserted that only a political process, accompanied by appropriate military action, could resolve the problem. Our correspondent Udi Segal reports.

[Begin Segal recording] The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee concluded its meeting a short while ago. Speaking after the session, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said that the only way to improve the security situation was to continue the peace process, while pursuing military action against terrorists in the territories. The prime minister rejected the calls to close off the Gaza Strip in retaliation for today's attack in Tel Aviv. [end recording]

[Begin Rabin recording] I have no doubt that the Palestinians in the territories would find themselves in even greater distress, and this would lead to an increase in the scope of terrorist activity against Israelis, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers, and Palestinians as well. There is no alternative but to seek a solution through a combination of measures such as temporarily closing off parts of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip and preventing their residents from entering Israel. This, however, does not preclude the possible presence of a despicable murderer—someone who could perpetrate the kind of attack that took place today in Tel Aviv—among the 100,000 or 150,000 Palestinians who cross into sovereign Israeli territory on a daily basis, and work in our cities and towns. [end recording]

[Begin Segal recording] [passage omitted] Rabin said that steps to impose tighter supervision over Gaza Strip residents leaving for work in Israel had been examined, but noted that in his opinion Israel could not pull out of the Gaza Strip without first reaching a political arrangement. As for the question of why the Israeli Government has not made the continuation of the peace talks conditional on a halt to terrorist attacks, Rabin said that if Israel did that it would be handing over veto rights to the extremists in the Palestinian camp. [end recording]

[Begin Rabin recording] It is inconceivable that our activities against terrorism, such as the deportations and temporary removal of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists to Lebanon, could be turned by them into conditions for resuming the talks. The peace talks should take place in any case, because they hold the solution for the medium and long-range future. We must not make the talks conditional on a halt to terrorist attacks, just as they [not further specified] must not make them conditional on Israel ceasing its activity against terrorism; otherwise, the fate of the talks will lie in the hands of the extremists in the Palestinian and Arab camps. [end recording]

[Begin Segal recording] At the beginning of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee's session there was a discussion of the security situation along Israel's northern border. The prime minister opined that Hizballah had not lowered its threshold for launching katyusha attacks, and estimated that the recent attacks may have come in reaction to local IDF operations. Moving on to the situation in the territories, the prime minister commented on the practice of firing rockets at the houses of wanted men. Rabin said that people no longer wished to harbor fugitives as a result of this policy. [end recording]

Closing Scheduled for 2 Mar

TA0103184693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Gaza Strip is to be closed off from tomorrow morning until further notice. This was reported a short while ago by an Israel Radio reporter from a military source. The closure has been imposed because of the knife attack in Tel Aviv this morning, in which two people were killed and eight injured.

Group Claims Responsibility

NC0103131593 Paris AFP in English 1239 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Report by Jean-Luc Renaudie]

[Excerpts] Tel Aviv, March 1 (AFP)—A young Palestinian from the occupied Gaza Strip stabbed to death two Israelis and wounded seven others in a Tel Aviv street Monday, in the bloodiest attack in Israel for almost a year. [passage omitted]

In Damascus, a Muslim fundamentalist group claimed responsibility for Monday's attack. It was an "operation carried out by the hero" Ziyad Salim Silmi the Islamic Jihad in Palestine said in a telephone call to AFP. "This operation is in retaliation for the fascist Zionist acts carried out in the occupied territories and the expulsions" of 400 Palestinians from the territories in December.

His family in Gaza confirmed the assailant was a sympathizer of Islamic Jihad and said that it was the first day he went to work in Israel since the December 1987 start of an uprising in the territories.

One of his brothers has been jailed for 15 months for belonging to Islamic Jihad, they said.

Rabin on Gaza 'Blockade'

TA0103202693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The security forces will impose a blockade on the Gaza Strip from 0300 on 2 March. Gazans will not be able to leave for work in Israel. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman announced that the purpose of the blockade is to check the validity of work and exit permits in order to prevent violent incidents between Gazans and Israeli inhabitants.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said that there is no intention of imposing an extended blockade on the Gaza Strip, and the one decided on today will last for only several days. Rabin told our reporter Mikha'el Tuchfeld that the aim was to examine several aspects of the security arrangements at the border crossings. He said that the existing situation cannot be significantly changed, but that it is advisable to have a time-out by imposing the blockade.

In response to a question by our correspondent, Rabin said that he knows nothing about an upcoming visit by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to Israel as reported by several news agencies.

Minister Explains Gaza Closure

TA0203121893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Telephone interview with Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer by Dalya Ya'iri on the "It's All Talk" program—live]

[Text] [Ya'iri] Good morning to you, Mr. Ben-Eli'ezer.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] Good morning.

[Ya'iri] In the aftermath of the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip, we might say that the price of security is a shortage in construction workers.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] First, I want to express my condolences to the families of the victims and to wish the wounded a quick recovery. Now, I am not worried about damages to the construction industry. I am concerned about something else, about an atmosphere of despair to which we are succumbing while failing to understand what has been happening here. I am referring to the terror attacks. All this has happened because of the steadfast peace policy the government has pursued since its inception. Our decision to enter a peace process has caused reactions.

[Ya'iri] But this could have been foreseen and steps could have been taken to thwart this.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] Certainly, and indeed we did take steps. I will come to that in a moment. These reactions came from all the elements who oppose peace. I do not want to go into details, because this is common knowledge. At the same time, this very same government—to the chagrin of many people both in Israel and abroad—deported the spiritual, religious, financial, and organizational infrastructure of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Moreover, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the Shin Bet, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], and the Israel Police, we have entered a state of maximum preparedness. Nevertheless, it is impossible to prevent an incident such as yesterday's, in which some frustrated unemployed youngster went on a killing rampage. Something similar happened two days ago, when an Arab decided to murder Jews. You should notice that there is a very interesting phenomenon common to both incidents: In both cases, the assailants had no security records. If there is any conclusion to be drawn from these incidents—and I know that this is extremely painful—it is that we must promote the peace talks without easing off on the security front.

[Ya'iri] At the same time, people feel that a closure constitutes the standard, worn-out answer to such incidents, and nobody is convinced that this solution is effective.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] As a former commander of Judaea and Samaria and coordinator of activities in the territories, let me tell you that this is a psychological rather than a long-term solution. We simply have no choice; we must calm the situation down. In my opinion, we should implement this closure for a period of from two or three weeks up to one month, simply to calm the situation down. We must recognize the fact that during this period, however, new terror squads will start forming.

[Ya'iri] Perhaps, then, such a closure will only facilitate the growth of such squads.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] We are maneuvering between two alternatives: On one hand, we cannot leave this area open, and on the other, the prolongation of this closure will only beget more hardship and despair. You must believe me, Dalya, when I say that I know of no ideology in the entire world that can serve as a solution to somebody who is starving or who cannot feed his children. Nothing will prevent such a man from murdering.

[Ya'iri] So perhaps the best thing would be to get out of there.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] If I was convinced that this is the solution, I would do so willingly. If we get out of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip without an arrangement guaranteeing international investments and providing jobs and food for those remaining.... [changes thought] Believe me, it is much easier to leave Judaea and Samaria than the Gaza Strip, and I am saying this here for the first time. The reason for this is that if we leave Judaea and Samaria, the residents will still have an outlet to Jordan via the Jordan bridges. If we leave the Gaza Strip and close the border, what outlet will they have: the sea? They will infiltrate across the border and murder in order to steal food. I am very familiar with the situation. I wish it was possible to get out of there as soon as tomorrow. Do you think anybody enjoys staying there? The Gaza Strip is the most

overcrowded area in the world, with 60 percent of its territory covered with refugee camps.

[Ya'iri] So you are saying that until the final peace arrangements are implemented, this situation will not change.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I am saying that we must be firm in pursuing the peace negotiations. It is very possible that we will have to evince greater flexibility—I am not referring to the deportee affair, but rather to easing conditions in the territories. It is also very possible that, at the same time, we will have to be firmer on the security issue. This is perhaps what we should do. It is fallacious, however, to believe that shooting people will solve anything. It is also erroneous to maintain that by getting out of the Gaza Strip tomorrow we will solve the problem. Such a solution is impossible. Believe me, I would be the first one to lift the banner of withdrawal if this was the solution, but it will not solve anything. There must be an infrastructure that will enable them to be self-reliant. Neither Egypt nor anybody else wants them; only the sea wants them. So what is all this talk? I am in favor of getting out of there. Our current problem is that we are in the midst of a difficult interim period, and various opposition elements are taking advantage of this by saying: You promised to implement an agreement within six to nine months. We certainly promised this. I say this outright: We were ready to sign an agreement within six months, but the other side is holding up the matter. I believe that if we had signed an agreement, our present security situation would have been much better.

[Ya'iri] Thank you, Minister Ben-Eli'ezer.

IDF Soldier Wounded in Attack in South Lebanon

TA0103173693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier sustained a light wound in south Lebanon when several Sagger antitank missiles were fired at an armored vehicle during routine activity in the central area of the security zone. The wounded soldier received treatment on the spot. Fire was returned.

Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the region has become quiet again. Earlier, it was reported that IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers shelled terrorist targets in the central area with big guns in retaliation for a Hizballah antitank missile attack.

Alleged 'Peace Agreement' With Syria Described

TA0103200293 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 1 Mar 93 p 2

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Diplomatic sources say that with Washington's support and blessing and French encouragement, Damascus and Tel Aviv have reached a peace agreement comprising the following clauses:

1. The Golan Heights will be divided into three parts. This division is to last five years, after which a new stage will begin—the post-test stage.

The division will be as follows:

A. One part under the control of U.S. forces.

B. One part under the control of Israeli forces.

C. One part under the control of Israeli police.

2. After five years, the Israeli forces will withdraw and will be replaced by U.S. forces.

3. Syria will not be allowed to deploy heavy Syrian forces on the frontier.

4. Israel in order "to maintain security and as a test" will be allowed to deploy motorized and heavy forces on the Israeli side.

5. U.S. warning stations will be established along the Golan Heights.

6. Some Israeli settlements will be placed for five years under U.S.-Israeli supervision and then under U.S. supervision.

7. With the announcement of this agreement, diplomatic representation will be exchanged between Damascus and Tel Aviv and extensive normalization of relations will begin between the two sides.

Those sources say that Syria has expressed readiness and pledged to cleanse the Lebanese arena of weapons and Muslim fundamentalists before signing the agreement, which might take place in the 10th round of talks even if no peace agreements are reached on the Jordanian and Palestinian fronts. Those sources say, however, that Jordan has informed Syria that it will go ahead and sign a similar agreement.

Peres Denies Secret Talks

TA0103185193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has denied that Israel is holding secret talks with Syria. He said the only talks were taking place in the context of the negotiations in Washington. Addressing the Knesset, Peres described the visit to Israel by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as a complete success. He said that at one time it was said Israel was a strategic asset to the United States; now it could be said she was her partner.

Rabin on U.S. Impression of Palestinian Delegation

TA0103174693 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] One big mess. That was how Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin described the impression received by the United States from the Palestinian delegation to the

peace talks. Speaking before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Rabin said that in his opinion, Yasir 'Arafat was holding up the peace process due to his extreme positions, and not because he had been kept out of the negotiations. Our correspondent Udi Segal reports.

[Begin Segal recording] During today's political debate at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was asked to sum up Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Israel. We have reached a very close level of understanding, the prime minister said. Rabin noted that the helicopter tour of northern Israel had provided Mr. Christopher with the opportunity to look at the situation from a slightly different angle.

With regard to the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, the prime minister claimed that the Americans had received the impression that there was no one calling the shots and that everything was one big disorderly mess. This was how Rabin described the U.S. impression of the Palestinian delegation.

Rabin was asked during the meeting: Why not call early elections in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip? I would not recommend taking such a step, the prime minister replied, because it would hold up the political process. The Palestinians, he said, do not even know whom to elect and which offices to elect them to, because we have still not agreed whether the elected body in the territories will be an administrative council, which is Israel's position, or a legislative assembly as demanded by the Palestinians.

Meretz Knesset member [MK] No'omi Hazan asked why Israel should not initiate contact with Yasir 'Arafat, or in other words, establish a channel of communication with the PLO. Rabin, of course, rejected this idea. There is an ongoing debate about whether 'Arafat constitutes an obstacle to the peace process because he was not part of it, or whether it is because he holds different views. In my opinion, the prime minister said, 'Arafat is holding up the negotiations due to his extreme positions. The prime minister estimated that the negotiations would be resumed next month and expressed the belief that this depends on the United States and Russia and on the amount of pressure they put on the relevant parties.

A source close to Rabin, commenting on Christopher's recent statements about resolving the deportee problem in the near future, said that these remarks did not refer to the adoption of any practical steps by Israel but rather to the positions that will be expressed by the Arab parties on the deportee affair. [end recording]

Mubarak Calls Rabin; Peres Visit to Cairo Unconfirmed

TA0203054393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Egyptian President Husni Mubarak phoned Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin last night. The two discussed the efforts to resume the peace talks. A Qol Yisra'el reporter adds that Mubarak also congratulated Rabin on his 71st birthday. Prime Minister Rabin last night told a Qol Yisra'el reporter he knows nothing of any planned visit by Mubarak to Israel.

In Egypt there have been reports that Foreign Minister Peres will visit Cairo next week, but the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem says it has heard nothing of this.

Minister Ramon Favors Unilateral Gaza Pullout

TA0203123193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Telephone interview with Health Minister Hayim Ramon by Dalya Ya'iri on the "It's All Talk" program—live]

[Text] [Ya'iri] Good morning to Health Minister Hayim Ramon.

[Ramon] Good morning.

[Ya'iri] Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer just said that it would be easier to leave Judaea and Samaria than to pull out of the Gaza Strip without first reaching an arrangement and securing international investments. He concluded, therefore, that there was no alternative but to impose a closure, mainly because of the psychological effects of such a step. What do you think?

[Ramon] I already expressed my opinion in a speech before the Knesset way back in October 1987, even before the intifadah began. I said that Israel has no reason to be in the Gaza Strip. There is a huge difference between the Gaza Strip and Judaea and Samaria. We have already said that we will not remain in any part of the Gaza Strip once an arrangement is reached and that the entire area will be turned over to Arab control. Since that is the case, we have no reason to be there. We have no interests in the Gaza Strip as opposed to Judaea and Samaria, where we have declared that we will seek to retain control over part of the land and demand security arrangements even after an arrangement is reached. The two issues are completely different. What happens if, despite our best efforts, we fail to reach an agreement regarding the Gaza Strip? Will we give the Gaza Strip residents the power to veto the process and to force us to stay there forever? I am sorry that the issue of withdrawal from the Gaza Strip always comes up in the context of terrorist attacks. I try to raise this issue in the cabinet on an almost weekly basis. It has reached the point where the ministers smile when there has been no terrorist incidents. The issue has nothing to do with terror; we simply cannot carry this burden.

[Ya'iri] So you are actually calling for a unilateral withdrawal without prior arrangements or debate.

[Ramon] First of all, an arrangement would be the best thing. However, in case we fail to reach an agreement within six months or one year, we should declare already

today that we will pull out of the Gaza Strip one or two years after a date we shall announce. The negotiations will continue during this period. In my opinion, the threat of unilateral withdrawal will speed up the negotiations. Military officials have told me that when they meet with Gaza Strip Palestinians who are causing what could be best described as problems, the military simply threatens to leave. This acts as a threat to the residents of the Gaza Strip, because they know that chaos will quickly ensue. Therefore, rather than harming the process, this could only facilitate the chances of reaching an arrangement.

[Ya'iri] On the other hand, such a state of chaos, while we are still responsible for the safety of the residents, could bring back memories of Sabra and Shatila.

[Ramon] I am very sorry, but the moment we walk out we are no longer responsible for them. Are we responsible for the residents of south Lebanon, where anarchy occasionally holds sway? When we left south Lebanon it was in a state of chaos, but we carried out a unilateral withdrawal. Are you saying that we should have remained in south Lebanon forever because of the chaotic situation there? Some Israeli political parties and, I am glad to say, only a small part of the public consider the Gaza Strip to be an indivisible part of the State of Israel. They want to remain in Gaza and to make it a part of sovereign Israel. I am referring to the Likud or Tzomet, and they present all sorts of arguments to support their position. But what about those who do not want to remain in the Gaza Strip and would rather leave? What do you mean there will be chaos? It is true that chaos may conceivably ensue. Are we condemned to live forever in insecurity because of the anarchy that is expected to break out there? Are we expected to become inured to these murders in the streets of Tel Aviv or Jerusalem every two or three months? And believe me, the situation will only get worse. This is inconceivable. Look at the statistics. By sheer coincidence, the victims of these knife attacks have mainly been new immigrants. I believe that about 10 immigrants have been murdered by Arabs from the Gaza Strip.

[Ya'iri] That is just a coincidence.

[Ramon] Yes, but it is undermining our very ability to live here without fear. These attacks do not pose any threat to Israel's existence, but they have seriously disrupted our sense of security and affected the quality of life of our citizens—and all this to absolutely no purpose! Look at all the saints with their bleeding hearts. Do they think that by giving the dirtiest jobs to the Gaza laborers we are turning them into ardent Zionists? Will they love us when they must cross five or six barriers on their way to work in Tel Aviv at 0300? The state of unemployment there is constantly worsening, and we cannot cope with it. As long as we remain there, the world responds to our appeals for international aid by telling us that it is our business. Let us state that we do not wish to remain there. Let us declare that we want to get out. The announcement of our firm readiness to withdraw will in itself have a significant impact on the world arena. The Palestinians, the Arab states, and the United Nations will all have to respond. I do not understand what we can lose here. As things stand now, we will regrettably have to close off the Gaza Strip and reopen it in another week. I am sorry to say that another terrorist attack will inevitably take place in another two or three months. We will then close the Strip again. That does not constitute a policy.

The reason we cannot hold on to the Gaza Strip is not the knife attacks but the fact that billions of dollars must be invested before the Gaza Strip will be able to offer its residents satisfactory living conditions. Israel cannot bear the cost of this. One million Palestinians live there and 70-75 percent of them are under the age of 30. What are some people proposing now? That young people be banned from working in Israel. So what will they do? The majority of people there are young. All these solutions fail to address the problem. Clearly, a political arrangement is the best solution. In the absence of a political arrangement, however, or if such an arrangement proves impossible to reach, we should come and announce our unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, while continuing our efforts to reach an agreement. The Gaza Strip will be the responsibility of its residents, and they can do whatever they see fit. I hope that they will live together in peace and not kill each other, but whatever happens, Israel cannot be responsible.

[Ya'iri] Thank you very much, Health Minister Hayim Ramon.

Press Reaction to Christopher Middle East Tour

TA2602145293

[Editorial Report] Several Israeli papers comment on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East tour in their 26 February editions. The general tenor of the comment is favorable both to U.S. policy and to Christopher's efforts in particular, with only one paper sharply critical of U.S. policy in the region.

Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on page 1 carries a commentary by Hemi Shalev entitled "Christopher Is Signalling: The Train Is Departing." Shalev remarks that "U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has left the impression of being a serious, diligent, and cautious man." Shalev claims that the statement issued by Christopher and his Russian counterpart in Geneva yesterday indicates he has reason to believe that all the sides to the conflict will acquiesce and come to the talks. Shalev states that "by setting 19 April as a target date, Christopher has narrowed the Palestinians' maneuvering room." Christopher in fact signalled them the train is about to leave the station, and if they fail to board they could be left behind. Shalev goes on to enumerate the various goodwill gestures offered by Israel to entice the Palestinians to return to the talks, adding that the Americans have also promised to act to improve the conditions of the Palestinians in the territories. "The Americans believe they have done their maximum for

the Palestinians and it is doubtful whether they will agree to modify their proposals." Shalev explains that consequently any attempt by the Palestinians to retract their initial positive reaction could leave them stranded for a long time to come.

Summing up the significance of the secretary's tour, Shalev emphasizes that "Christopher's statement signifies the U.S. Administration's intention to dive into the cold waters of the Middle East conflict. The administration agrees with Yosi Beilin's assertion that the world's oldest conflict—commencing from World War II—is also the most soluble conflict in the world at present."

Another DAVAR commentary by Hemi Shalev entitled "A Bolstering Hug" on page 15 dwells on "the warm relations between the Jerusalem government and the Washington administration" and the results of Secretary Christopher's Middle East tour. Explaining why "the Clinton administration has decided to shower love on Yitzhaq Rabin," Shalev says: "The administration reckons the Israeli public may have elected the Labor party but is far from embracing the main message of its platform, namely that painful concessions have to be made for peace. On the other hand, the Israeli public loves prime ministers favored by the Americans. The operative conclusion: Hug to bolster."

Shalev qualifies his remarks by stating that "while the tone may have changed, the American music remains unchanged: The U.S. stands have not altered in substance. Speaking with al-Asad, the United States still hints—within the limits of diplomatic tact—that the Golan Heights is an occupied territory, which should one day return to its rightful owners. Talking with the Palestinians, the Americans say that if they come to their senses and return to the negotiating table, their reservations about Israel's interim arrangement proposals will find more than an attentive ear." The new element is Christopher's promise for "much greater U.S. involvement" in the peace process.

Analyzing Christopher's visit, Shalev says that despite the lack of tangible results, "Christopher has nonetheless laid a political foundation the import of which will become clear in the short and the long run: In the short run, in his capability to bring the parties back to the negotiating table; and in the long run, in the implementation of the bear-hug strategy toward Israel in negotiations." In his view, "this strategy is a preliminary step toward leading Rabin to the tough decisions that will be required later on. The prime minister attributes supreme importance to the intensity of Israeli-U.S. relations. Rabin, a naturally suspicious man in any case, received Clinton's election as sure evidence of impending doom, but the American approach to the deportee affair quickly managed to dispel his fears."

Shalev notes "the ideological affinity on the Palestinian issue between Israel and the United States," adding that "there is no danger of that problem disrupting the close Israeli-U.S. coordination." Shalev adds that "for Rabin, for the government, and for the entire peace process, the principal question is the future of the Golan Heights." He states that "if peace is the objective, it is impossible to avoid making the basic declaration that the entire Golan Heights belongs to Syria."

Shalev concludes by saying that while there are diverging conjectures as to the prime minister's stand on the Golan question, with some saying "he has crossed the Rubicon and in his heart agreed to pay the required price for a breakthrough" and others doubting his ability to make such a decision, "the Americans have apparently joined the first group: For the time being, they are betting on Rabin."

Also on page 15 of DAVAR, David Pedatzur echoes Shalev's sentiment as to the U.S. Administration's friendly attitude toward Israel in a commentary entitled "Limited Partners." He adds, however, that "even a friendly administration cannot be expected to turn its back on the traditional U.S. stands on the settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict. With regard to territorial compromise, the United States is closer to the Arab stand than to that of Israel," and "only its stand on the substance of peace is closer to Israel than to that of the Arabs." Despite that, Pedatzur says that even when "difficulties, misunderstandings, or confrontations with the new administration occur" in the course of negotiations, "we will not be able to accuse or suspect Clinton and Gore of antagonism toward Jews or Israel."

Pedatzur suggests that while "it matters what the Americans are and will be saying, if and when the peace talks resume," nonetheless "Israel should perhaps learn from its enemies how not to show all its cards, even to 'a full partner,' in the course of tough and sensitive negotiations."

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew carries a page-3 commentary by David Witzthum entitled "A Calculated Risk." Witzthum asserts: "Christopher is convinced the sides to the Middle East negotiations are not inclined to say 'no' to the Clinton administration. He has managed to surround his personality and his advisers with a positive atmosphere and convinced everybody of his seriousness. At the same time he has taken a calculated risk." Witzthum notes that the invitation to the sides to attend the talks in April "is the first move of the 'full partner.'" Noting the fact that the Americans have opted to involve the Russians in the process, Witzthum remarks that they are pressuring the Palestinians to come to Washington in order to discuss substantive issues, and are also pressuring Israel to solve the deportees quandary. Witzthum ends by saying: "We are suddenly confronted by an experienced chess player whose board is the entire world." This first move indicates, Witzthum says, that we are all "pawns in the big game which is now commencing for real—the struggle against the dangers of reactionary movements and fundamentalism worldwide."

Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew, in a page 2 editorial entitled "The Political Deterioration," offers a sharp contrast to the general acclaim for Christopher's mission. HATZOFE notes that far from marking a breakthrough in the peace process, this tour signifies great dangers as far as Israel is concerned: "It transpires that this time, just as in the past, it is Israel who is called upon to make concessions and implement gestures in order to appease the Palestinians." The latter, according to HATZOFE, have used Christopher's visit to pose more demands in various spheres. Seeing that this is the situation, "it is very doubtful whether Israel could benefit from the talks. Rabin's government, in fact, has fallen into an American-Palestinian trap out of which it will find it very difficult to extricate itself." It is to be feared, states HATZOFE, that "we are on the eve of a 'new era' in the peace process, which will culminate in the establishment of a Palestinian- PLO state in parts of Greater Israel." HATZOFE goes on to emphasize that, "with all our desire to achieve progress on the road toward peace, we must not relinquish the principles that have always directed Israel vis-a-vis an arrangement with the Palestinians," these principles being: no to the PLO, no to an independent Palestinian state, and a continuation of the settlement drive in all parts of Greater Israel.

HATZOFE ends with a sharp warning: "The policy of withdrawal that characterizes Rabin's government is extremely dangerous both to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. This is the last minute to demand that the government stop the deterioration, before it is too late."

Rabin Expresses Desire To Cooperate With India

BK0203041093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The Israeli prime minister, Mr. Yitzhaq Rabin, has said that his country is eager to extend its cooperation to India in the technological and agricultural fields. In an exclusive interview to an Indian daily in Tel Aviv, Mr. Rabin said that both the countries have common views on many issues and mutual cooperation will work for their benefit.

Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega Meets With King Husayn

PA2602125893 Managua Canal Cuatro Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 25 Feb 93

[Text] Commander Daniel Ortega, secretary general of the Sandinist National Liberation Front, met on 24 February with King Husayn of Jordan. They discussed the peace aspirations of the Jordanian people—who have been affected by the Gulf war and situation of the Palestinian state—the peace process in Central America, the situation in Nicaragua, and the blockade facing the sister Republic of Cuba.

The visit to Jordan is part of former Nicaraguan President Ortega's tour of Arab countries after participating recently in a Socialist International meeting in Greece.

Palestinian Deportees Praise King's Support

JN2502192793 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 25 Feb 93

[Text] The Palestinian deportees hailed His Majesty King Husayn's position which presses for the implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy and supports the deportees' cause, and lauded his firm position toward deportation in general.

They also hailed the position of the government, parliament, and the Jordanian people which supports them and entrenches their steadfastness, and seeks their return to their occupied homeland.

This has come in a message the Palestinian deportees in south Lebanon sent to His Majesty King Husayn. The message says:

Your Majesty the King,

Your support and action for our cause, which presses for the implementation of Resolution 799, is considered an honorable position that is inscribed in our hearts. Our Palestinians relatives and all honorable people in the world share with us this view which will be recorded with honor by history.

God will certainly aid those who aid His (cause) for verily God is full of strength, exalted in might. [Koranic verses]

King Visits General Command, Meets Chief of Staff

JN0103190593 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn, supreme commander of the Armed Forces, visited the Armed Forces General Command today. His majesty was received by Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu-Talib, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his aides. His majesty the supreme commander met with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a while and discussed a number of matters of interest to the Armed Forces.

Ties With Former Soviet Republics Approved

JN2702184093 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] A royal decree today approved the establishment of diplomatic representation between Jordan and each of the independent Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union at the level of non-resident ambassador. The five Islamic states are: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan.

Another decree also approved a cabinet decision to exchange diplomatic representation with Kazakhstan at the ambassadorial level.

A high level Jordanian delegation has just concluded a tour of the Islamic states where it discussed cooperation.

Further Reportage on Deportees, Developments

Army Moves To Prevent Smuggling

NC2602152393 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 26 Feb 93

[Text] The Lebanese Army in the Marj al-Zuhur-Libbaya area has adopted strict security measures at its roadblocks and has intensified its patrols on hills overlooking the Palestinian deportees' camp.

The Lebanese Army last night arrested two people taking food and clothes to the deportees from nearby villages. The two were taken to the Ablah Barracks for questioning.

Israeli Artillery Shells Area

NC0203095193 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Israeli artillery shells fell today near the Palestinian deportees camp in Marj al-Zuhur without causing injury. Security sources said Israeli artillery fired six 120-mm mortar shells around 1,000 meters west of the Palestinian deportees camp. The reason for the Israeli shelling is unknown.

U.S. Six Points 'Waste of Time'

NC0203080093 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, spokesman for the Palestinian deportees, believes the six points proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to resolve the deportees issue are a waste of time; they favor Israel and attempt to dilute the issue. Al-Rantisi said that if Israel fails to recognize that deportations are not legitimate, the issue will remain pending. He said he believes that the Arabs, including the Palestinian delegation, will not return to the talks with the Israeli entity before finding a solution to the deportees issue.

Military Situation in Western al-Biqa' Updated

NC0103173093 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] A state of extreme caution prevailed in western al-Biqa' today following the Israeli bombardment of the region in the past few hours. There have been reports of Israeli reinforcements and military movements in the occupied border strip, coupled with combing operations and overflights.

The Islamic Resistance has claimed responsibility for the attack launched today against the South Lebanese Army [SLA] position in the western sector of the occupied border strip. The resistance affirmed that an Israeli Merkava tank was destroyed and its crew either killed or wounded.

The SLA's radio [Voice of the South] admitted the operation, noting that an antitank rocket and three B-10 shells were fired against an SLA position in Tallusah in the central sector. The radio claimed that there was no damage and added that fire was returned, particularly in Majdal Silm and Qabrikha. REUTER, however, reported that at least one SLA member was wounded.

A security source has said that the SLA's bombardment of Majdal Silm wounded citizen Muhammad Jawad Zahwah and damaged seven homes and a mosque.

In another development, Israeli warplanes flew low-altitude sorties over Sidon and the Palestinian camps at noon today.

Hizballah on Enemy's 'Extensive' Buildup

NC0203080993 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Excerpts] The Islamic resistance yesterday added a new triumph over the Zionist enemy and its agents in the south to its record of victories. During the blessed month of Ramadan, the Islamic resistance heroes waged a courageous attack on a mechanized Zionist enemy patrol on the Markaba-Tallusah road, burning out a Merkava tank and killing or wounding everyone inside. The mujahidin returned to their bases safely. [passage omitted]

Fearing further painful blows to the enemy and their agents, the occupation forces declared a state of maximum alert among their ranks. This was accompanied by extensive military buildup in the past few hours. Scores of tanks were seen entering the southern tip of Jabal al-Dahr and taking up positions in the Burghuz triangle. The Lahd militia reinforced its position in Taw'amat Niha with armored vehicles and artillery. These military activities occur while occupation officers arrive at Marj 'Uyun barracks, the headquarters of the Zionist leadership.

Al-Hariri Says No Changes in Government

NC0203081993 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri has been cited as saying that the government will stay on without any amendment or alteration. It is busy implementing the program that gained it the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies, particularly in rebuilding that destroyed by war. He reportedly considers differences to be something natural. We reach agreement following dialogue arising out of the country's higher interest and proceeding from the need to develop an administration.

Al-Hariri said there is no dispute over the essential principles. The prime minister said he was satisfied with ministers' performance.

Deputy Prime Minister Returns From Damascus

NC0203080293 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr has returned from Damascus after meeting Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Chief of Staff General Hikmat al-Shihabi

Committee Approves Three New Ministries

NC0103191093 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Chamber of Deputies' Finance and Budget Committee today approved the establishment of the Vocational and Technical Education, Transportation, and Environment Ministries.

The committee tabled the proposal to establish the Ministry of Expatriate Affairs and Ministry of Social Affairs for discussion by the joint parliamentary committees.

DFLP Delegation Meets Patriarch Sfayr

NC0203110493 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Patriarch Sfayr today received a delegation from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] headed by Salih Zaydan, a member of the DFLP's political bureau, and including Suhayl al-Natur and Abu-al-Sa'id Murad.

Afterward, Zaydan said the meeting took place to confirm that the great escalation of the intifadah inside the homeland stems from rejection of the autonomy [al-hukm al-dhati] project and settlement building, from attempts to split up Resolution 799, and from the U.S. policy of double standards in dealing with Israeli oppression and tyranny.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Welcomes Iran's Peace Talks Proposal

LD0103163793 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Afghan president has welcomed Iran's proposal on ending that country's clashes through negotiations. In an interview with Iranian journalists in Kabul, Borhanoddin Rabbani expressed the hope that these negotiations will take place at a suitable time.

Remarking that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always eagerly supported the establishment of order and Islamic government in Kabul, Rabbani said: Iran's role in resolving the clashes in Afghanistan is very significant and laudable. Regarding Afghanistan's relations with Iran, Rabbani said: The two countries share a common Islamic goal.

Elsewhere in the interview, the Afghan president pointed to the efforts of the peace delegations in his country, adding: There is hope that the existing differences will be solved through negotiations.

On the government's plan for holding separate and bilateral talks with Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami and Hezb-e Eslami, Rabbani said: Even though the two parties have taken up the same position, in view of the fact that their political and ideological stands are different, their unity will be very short-lived, and hence the need to hold separate negotiations with them.

Pakistani Delegation Views Resolving Crisis

LD0103193693 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Statement by the peace delegation of the Jami'at-e Eslami-e Pakistan—read by announcer]

[Excerpts] A 15-man delegation of Jami'at-e Eslami-e Pakistan, headed by Qazi Hussain Ahmad, visited Kabul from 15 February at the invitation of Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, and Golboddin Hekmatyar, in order to solve the present crisis through political negotiations. [passage omitted]

The delegation was in Kabul until 28 February. It talked with the president and a number of officials of the Islamic state as well as leaders of various jihadi groups. The delegation stated its unanimous opinion on the following points:

1. A cease-fire in Kabul was observed in honor (?of the delegation), and the delegation hopes that the cease-fire will continue.

2. Negotiations on the solution of the crisis have started. Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani and Golboddin Hekmatyar have appointed delegations in connection with the solution of the problem.

3. A body comprising personalities, ulema, and scholars of the Islamic world has also been appointed in order to state their opinion concerning the complaints that exist regarding the convocation of the Reconciliation and Settlement Council.

4. The delegation expresses thanks to Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, and the jihadi leaders for providing facilities for their work.

5. The delegation believes that in the future it will cooperate in the solution of the crisis, and to this end it has appointed representatives in Kabul to act until the final solution of the problem.

6. The Jami'at-e Eslami-e Pakistan will make every effort to bring together personalities included in the commission listed in point 3 above after Ramadan.

Mas'ud Discusses Hekmatyar, Resuming War

BK0103143093 Hong Kong AFP in English 1228 GMT 1 Mar 93

[By Herve Clerc]

[Text] Kabul, March 1 (AFP)—As a new attempt to bring peace to Afghanistan began Monday, Defence Minister Ahmed Shah Mas'ud made it clear that if the conflict resumed with his main enemy Golboddin Hekmatyar it would be swift and decisive.

While leaving the door open to continuing negotiations between the rival factions, he admitted he was preparing for a new round of hostilities should diplomacy fail.

"If war breaks out again, it will be a very short war," Mas'ud told AFP.

Mas'ud, 39, the most powerful man in the beleaguered Afghan Government, was speaking on the eve of the arrival of President Borhanoddin Rabbani in Islamabad for peace talks arranged by Pakistani mediators.

He presents himself as the true defender of Afghan independence against Hekmatyar, besieging Kabul from the south for some nine months, and Uzbek militia leader Abdol Rashid Dostam in the north, whom he described as "instruments in the hands of foreign forces."

With his sharp profile, lavish with his time and his words, embellishing his ideas with sweeping hand gestures, Mas'ud is the exact opposite of his bitter rival Hekmatyar, grudging in all aspects.

"Hekmatyar is a dictator. He only wants one thing: power by whatever means necessary," he said.

Although Mas'ud's forces were beaten back last month from Kabul's inner suburbs by the forces of Hezb-e Eslami, Hekmatyar's party, Mas'ud set no great store by his rival's fighting men.

"They depend on Arabs and Punjabis and lack infantry," he said, adding that nine Arabs from the Hezb ranks were killed in recent fighting.

On Monday another skirmish south of Kabul saw three mojahedin and three civilians killed, one of Mas'ud's aides said. The previous day some 80 people were killed in a bombardment of a bazaar in the capital, breaking a fragile Ramadan truce.

Mas'ud, who practically never sleeps in the same place two nights running, sometimes gives the impression of a man under seige in a city under siege.

His room is that of a soldier-monk: bare walls, a bed, a naked bulb lit by a generator, and several books—the Koran, the great Sufist mystique Ghazali, a Persian grammar book.

Showing a certain lack of coordination in the government's workings, he admitted not being aware of the nomination of Dostam as defence vice-minister, announced last month in Quetta, Pakistan, by Najibollah Lafraie, de facto minister of foreign affairs.

Relations between Mas'ud and Dostam, who has close to 5,000 men at his disposal in Kabul, have deteriorated noticeably since last August when the troops of both men fought side by side against the Hezb.

Mas'ud said Dostam offered logistic support to both the Hezb and Wahadat, the Shi'te pro-Iranian faction which is also fighting the government.

Mas'ud was a hero of the mojahedin in 14 years of fighting the communist forces of Kabul and Moscow until Soviet forces withdrew and the government of Najibollah fell.

In a sign of goodwill towards Moscow, he announced that several Russian prisoners-of-war still in the hands of the ruling Jamiat-e Eslami party would be released within a few days.

One of the guards at the door has a very pale complexion for an Afghan. He sports a black beard, totes a Kalashnikov rifle and answers to the name Islamuddin. He is a former prisoner-of-war who decided to stay in Afghanistan and is now one of Mas'ud's bodyguards.

Bangladesh

Accord Signed on Trade Ties With PRC

BK2802085693 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Chittagong and Shanghai, the port cities of Bangladesh and China, are now to have a closer interaction following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, to this effect. The MOU aims at strengthening cooperation between two major cities of the two countries. One would like to note here that Shanghai is the main city of China. It is known for its industrial activities that provides a major link for China's expanding maritime trade with the rest of the world. Shanghai (?has a special) importance for Bangladesh in the context of expanding economic relations. The MOU signed in Chittagong on Friday for establishing closer relationship between the two port cities reflects a welcome positive development for expanding further Sino-Bangladesh bilateral cooperation. We fully share the sentiments expressed by the two sides at Friday's signing ceremony.

The bilateral friendship and understanding between Bangladesh and China have expanded over the years. A common identity of views and as much as shared perceptions on regional and international issues have cemented the traditional bonds of friendship between the two countries. Against this backdrop, the new MOU can be considered as a step in the right direction for consolidating further mutual partnership and cooperation. We hope that interaction between the two cities would make bilateral collaboration more meaningful and fruitful.

It may be recalled here that Bangladesh and China signed in December last a fresh trade agreement for a three-year term. Under the new agreement, bilateral trade has been rearranged in convertible currency in the changed policy context. The agreement is now operational with effect from 31 January, providing the bilateral trade transactions in convertible currency. It, however, allows counter trade or barter between private business houses and corporations of the two countries. It also provides for continuation of most favored status to each other.

The institutional arrangement for the Sino-Bangladesh bilateral cooperation has also been strengthened in recent years. At the last meeting of the Joint Commission between the two countries, a number of specific areas were identified for promotion of mutual cooperation for the benefit of the two countries. The two sides are quite aware of the relevance and significance of bilateral cooperation in different fields. On her part, China has appreciated the need for such concrete measures. International market (?faces) changing role in bilateral trade and certain corrective measures are needed to make [words indistinct]. Tariff reduction for some Bangladesh's exportables like jute, jute goods, tea, indigo, and leather to facilitate an easy entry of such items in the Chinese market. Frequent exchanges of trade delegations between the two countries would also help boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation in a more balanced way. We note with satisfaction that appropriate follow-up actions are now being taken by the two sides to implement the agreed decision of the last meeting of Sino-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission and trade (?review) discussion.

1975 Coup President Reenters Politics

BK2802085593 Dhaka DAINIK ITTEFAQ in Bengali 23 Feb 93 p 1

[Excerpt] Ten political parties yesterday formed a new political alliance named the Nationalist Democratic Alliance, NDA, with former President Khondaker Mushtaque Ahmed as its chairman. The manifesto of the new party was announced at a news conference held on the occasion at a local hotel.

Talking to newsmen later, former President Khondaker Mushtaque said he had promulgated the Indemnity Ordinance [amendment to Bangladesh Constitution which banned trial of persons linked to the 1975 coup in which President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed and Mushtaque was appointed president by coup leaders]. The former president asserted that he had rightly proclaimed this ordinance. Mushtaque further added that later this ordinance was legalized [after ratification in parliament] by two presidents of the country. Now he has again become active in politics after a long absence. In reply to a question, the former president said that he was not actually inactive during this period and added that he made several attempts to forge national unity. In this effort he was sometimes successful, other times unsuccessful. He confessed that sometimes he remained silent on certain issues.

This alliance comprises the following political parties: the Democratic League-Mushtaque; the Freedom Party; the Krishak Sramik Party; the Bangladesh National Democratic Party; the Muslim League Oikko Prokria; the Bangladesh Islamic Party; the Bangladesh Islami Andolon; the Naya Jana Gonotantrik Party; the Liberal Democratic Party; and the Islamic Democratic League.

The office bearers of the alliance are as follows: Khondaker Mushtaque Ahmed, chairman; Col. (Ret'd.) Abdur Rashid, executive chairman; A.S.M. Sulaiman, vice chairman; Advocate Shafiqur Rahman, vice chairman; and Anwar Zahid, secretary general.

The party manifesto read out at the news conference said the main objective of the National Democratic Alliance is to consolidate the sovereignty and independence of the country. It said the nation is facing an all-embracing crisis and added that a democratically elected government imbued with the sense of patriotic nationalism committed to Islamic principles can save the nation from the present crisis. [passage omitted]

Communists To Join Mainstream Politics

BK2802154693 Hong Kong AFP in English 1332 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] DHAKA, Feb 28 (AFP)—The Bangladesh Communist Party (CPB) on Sunday voted to change the party name and work in future in line with changing times, a party spokesman said.

The Central Committee voted—40 to 13—for the change, an overwhelming verdict for "transformation," but the final decision will be taken in a special party congress later, Nurul Islam Nahid told reporters at the end of a three-day convention.

The convention was marked by heated debate and sudden demonstrations. Nahid, however, denied the party was heading for a split and said "wait for the congress."

Earlier Sunday, sources had said that the CPB would split, with only hard-core Marxists clinging to the old party flag of hammer and sickle.

Mujahedul Islam Selim, a top CPB leader against the change, said the congress would overturn Sunday's central committee decision.

"We will circulate the proposal among the members and most will disagree," he was quoted as saying.

Political observers here said many of the CPB leaders and workers were disillusioned after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and wanted to follow the current mainstream politics.

"Some opined they were being side-tracked because of following their old political line," a source close to the party said.

SAARC Trade Pact Approved 'in Principle'

BK0103163093 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The government has approved in principle the draft of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] Preferential Trading Agreement. The approval was given at a cabinet meeting held at Bangabhavan today with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The draft agreement was prepared on the basis of the commitments made to the sixth SAARC summit held in Colombo in December 1991 for the liberalization of trade in the region. The agreement aims at sharing the benefits of the trade expansion by the member-countries. It also stipulates that the SAARC countries will promote and sustain mutual trade and economic cooperation among themselves through exchange in concessions in accordance with the arrangements like tariff, para-tariff, non-tariff, and trade measures. The draft agreement will be placed before the SAARC council committee for the adoption by the regional forum.

India

Janata Dal-B Members Join Samajwadi Party

BK2602155493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Feb 93

[Text] Fourteen Janata Dal-B members of the dissolved Madhya Pradesh assembly, four general secretaries, and

three former members of parliament today joined the Samajwadi Party. This was announced by the senior leader, Mr. Raghunath, at a press conference in Lucknow today.

Further Reportage on BJP Opposition Moves

BJP MP Katiar Detained

BK2802155293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] MP, Mr. Vinay Katiar, was detained under the National Security Act in New Delhi today. He was charged with making inflammatory speeches after his release from Matatila prison on 10th of last month. Mr. Katiar was kept at Matatila prison after his arrest in connection with the 6 December events.

BJP Demands Police Head Removal

BK0103140093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The government will look into any complaint of police excesses while preventing a BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rally on Thursday [25 February]. The Home Minister Mr. S.B. Chavan, however, rejected the BJP demand for the removal of the police commissioner of Delhi. He regretted the inconvenience caused to the members [of parliament] and the public on that demand. Mr. Chavan was reacting to the demands of the BJP members who had stalled the proceedings during the zero hour over the issue.

The issue was again raised by the BJP members at 1400 when the house met after the adjournment. They reiterated their demand for an apology from the government and inquired into the incident at Vithalbhai Patel House and the removal of the police commissioner. A Congress-I member praised the government for ensuring security to the people in the capital and asked the BJP whether it would apologize for the incidents at Ayodhya on the sixth of December.

The House witnessed noisy exchanges between the BJP and the ruling benches for some time. Order was restored after the speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, assured the agitated members that he will look into the matter and appropriate steps will be taken. A delegation of women BJP MPs belonging to both houses met the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, today to apprise him of the alleged excesses by the police on the party activists, particularly women, on last Thursday in the capital. The speaker assured the delegation that he will look into the matter.

Developments in Punjab, Antiterrorism Campaign

Terrorism Dealt 'Crippling Blow'

BK0103045293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Terrorism in Punjab which for all intents and purposes has entered the last leg of its decade-old journey, received yet another crippling blow yesterday evening with the killing of one of the most dreaded terrorists and self-styled chief of the Bhindranwale Tigers Force of Khalistan, Gurbachan Singh Manochahal, in an encounter with the security forces.

A beaming Punjab police chief, Mr. K.P.S. Gill said we have won the battle and other militants should surrender immediately, otherwise, they will meet the same fate. A close associate of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, Gurbachan Singh Manochahal was a deserter from the army signal corps. He formed his own gang with the blessings of Bhindranwale and was instrumental in getting his men trained in Pakistan by crossing the border many times. Well-versed in wireless operations, Manochahal was able to bug and decode police messages, and could escape the police dragnet at least four times. He arranged about 500 AK-47 rifles through Pakistan for his gang which was responsible for the killing of over 1,000 innocent persons in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and, of course, in Punjab. The chief of the one of the five Panthic [guiding forces behind the campaign for an independent Sikh homeland—Khalistan] Committees which declared the formation of the so-called Khalistan from the Akal Takht [the highest seat of Sikh religion] in January 1986, Manochahal was so proud of his authority that during Mr. Chandra Shekhar's tenure as prime minister, he got a letter published in the newspaper saying that talks with militants over the issue of Khalistan could be held only in U.N. Headquarters.

No doubt, Mr. K.P.S. Gill and his dedicated men deserve all the credit, but the most important point to be noticed is the close and wholehearted cooperation offered by the people of Punjab, who have openly come out against terrorism. The general public provided specific information about Manochahal's hideout and even after his escape on Friday from near the village (Bagria) they helped the security forces in carrying out combing operations. Fifty seven police parties were engaged in the search for the dreaded terrorist in the village of Ratol, Bagria, and other small hamlets and Manochahal was finally chased and engaged in an encounter at a farmhouse in Ratol.

The Punjab chief minister, Mr. Beant Singh's, congratulatory message to security forces asking them to keep up the fight against terrorism provides the right impetus and one hopes the day is not far off when the traditional, prosperous, and joyful life of the people in Punjab will be back on the rails.

State Resolved To End Militancy

BK0203032893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The Punjab chief minister has reiterated his government's resolve to root out terrorism. Presiding over a seminar on the role of youths on the present situation at Chandigarh, Mr. Beant Singh asked the youths to guard themselves against the evil designs of the forces trying to create problems in the name of religion. Pointing out to the decline in militancy in the state, the chief minister appealed to the misguided youths to abandon the path of violence and help bring Punjab back on the rails of economic prosperity.

Three Punjab Militants Killed

BK0203052293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, three militants including two hard-core were killed in encounters with the security forces last night. A police spokesman said one of the militants, responsible for many killings, was shot dead in an encounter at Baler village in the Tarn Taran area in Amritsar District. Another was killed near Dhanpur in Manansa District. In Ludhiana District, one militant was killed near Jaspalbandar village and two Japanese wireless sets were recovered.

Tripura Chief Minister Resigns

BK2702094693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] The Tripura chief minister, Mr. Samir Ranjan Burman, tendered his resignation to the governor, Mr. K.V. Raghunatha Reddy, at Raj Bhavan [Governor's House] in Agartala this morning. Our Agartala correspondent reports that the term of the Tripura legislative assembly expires tomorrow. Mr. Samir Ranjan Burman, chief minister of the Congress-I-Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti coalition ministry, has been asked by the governor to continue till further instructions.

Further Reportage on Draft Budget, Reaction

Boost in Exports Expected

BK2802045893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Commentary on the union budget by B.B. Bhattacharyya of the Institute of Economic Growth]

[Text] In the post-budget discussion on television yesterday, the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, said that no single budget can tackle all problems in the economy. One has to therefore decide priorities. In this year's budget, top priorities are given to lowering of indirect taxes, and full convertibility of the rupee in the current account. The budget also continues the efforts to cut fiscal deficit and government expenditure. Other liberalization and globalization measures like divestment of shares in public enterprises, financial deregulation, and encouragement of direct foreign investment are also continued in this year's budget.

In his presentation in a sequence, the finance minister has given a clear message that the structural reform program initiated in July 1991 is irreversible. Custom duties are lowered in practically all commodities. Excise duties are also lowered in wide-range of commodities notably in consumer goods, both luxury and mass consumption. The expected revenue loss on account of lowering of customs and excise would be 4,522 crore rupees which may exceed perhaps the biggest tax cut in India's fiscal history.

The budget deficit, if realized, would also be one of the lowest in real terms in the last two decades. There is always a big difference between the budget expectations and realizations. It is not yet clear how the budget deficit can be contained to such a low figure if no significant resource mobilization is attempted. Perhaps the gap may be filled up by increased external borrowings, divestment of shares in public enterprises, and lowering of public investment in real terms.

Although plan outlays in agriculture, rural development, and social infrastructure like health, education, and family welfare are increased, the overall public investment in real terms will not be higher than what it was two years ago. Unless this is made up by private investment, the expected recovery of the economy from recession may be delayed further.

Exporters would have, however, greater incentives from this budget. Exports in general and primary exports in particular will get a boost from rupee convertibility. Agriculture has also got a wide range of concessions and benefits in this budget. Large-scale industries and corporate sector are however disappointed.

The immediate response of the stock market is not very optimistic. Likewise, personal and corporate taxpayers are also disappointed. But as the finance minister has pointed out, he cannot tackle all the problems in one budget.

Growth To Hit 5-5.5 Percent

BK2802100693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] The finance secretary has said that if the budget reliefs are not passed on to the consumers, the government may have to review the cut in customs and excise duties. At a post-budget news conference in New Delhi today, along with other Finance Ministry officials, Mr. Geethakrishnan asserted that industry would be forced by economic realities to pass on to consumers the benefits of the massive customs and excise duty reductions. Mr. Geethakrishnan said that yesterday's budget will help the industry in lowering the cost of production and giving consumers a choice.

The economic affairs secretary, Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, said that he does not foresee any increase in the prices of petroleum products in the near future in the wake of the increase in oil import bill due to the full convertibility of the rupee. He ruled out any immediate increase in oil prices. He said the budget will give a big boost to exports and help in efficient industrialization. The finance secretary said that further tightening of the belt is not necessary and therefore the government has decided to pass on the benefits to the recession-hit industries by way of customs and excise relief of over 4,000 crore rupees to stimulate growth and boost exports. He was confident that the exchange rate of the rupee will settle somewhere between the official and market rates with the introduction of full convertibility. Mr. Ahluwalia said that the inflation rate would continue to decelerate and the growth rate is expected to pick up around 5 to 5.5 percent in 1993-94 from the present level of 4 percent. He said the fiscal consolidation has already taken place and the deficit has been substantially brought down. He said the current account deficit, which was around 2.9 percent, would be brought down below 1 percent in the future.

Answering a question, Mr. Ahluwalia said that the National Stock Exchange based in Bombay is likely to become operational during this year. He said a committee has been formed by the Industrial Development Bank of India to execute the project. Promoters have been identified and a committee is currently studying the telecommunication network required for the project.

The stock market all over the country displayed a sign of recovery during the week under review on revival of brisk speculative-cum-investment buying and closed with heavy to moderate gains. The market started on a firm note, enthused on reports of encouraging pre-budget economic survey and expectations of full convertibility of rupee to boost country's exports. Thereafter, prices continued to rise throughout the week. Later, in the pre-budget session, stockbrokers turned somewhat reserved in the wake of the general budget and shares declined marginally. However, in the post-budget session, operators were optimistic on budgetary proposals for 100 percent convertibility on current account and, with the result, shares zoomed at a rapid rate and touched this week's best levels. Subsequently, prices started declining on selling following the finance minister's announcement to postpone corporate tax reform for one more year and no change in the personal tax.

Rupees' Convertibility Welcomed

BK0103081493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Trade circles in Singapore have welcomed the full convertibility of the Indian rupee and the cuts in excise and import duties. The budget has been described as a positive step toward liberalizing the economy. Our Southeast Asia correspondent reports that full convertibility of the rupee will promote higher levels of trade with India. Our correspondent says that the high-level business delegation that visited India last month was impressed by the fast going reforms and hopes a sizeable investment will flow from Singapore.

Improved Trade Prospects

BK0203044093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Commentary by T.G. Nallamuthu]

[Text] A few months ago when the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, told an investors conference in Singapore that India will make the rupee convertible in two to three years, not many people many of whom were [word indistinct] thought that it was possible. Therefore, the floating of the Indian rupee announced in the budget came as pleasant move to Singaporeans who have been keeping an eye on India ever since the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, started liberalizing the economy.

Singapore, which had been dependent on Indonesia and Malaysia for its production base to maintain its exports worth at over $60 billion, three times more than India, has been watching its neighbours growing at a faster pace resulting in a sharp increase in the labor cost. Looking for new economies to (fetch?) its imports and plan production units, Singapore has achieved three options - China, Vietnam, and India. Singapore likes India not only because it is the closest but its labor is highly skilled enough though cheaper, and the local market itself is very big.

A high-level business team has just returned after visiting many parts of India and as the entrepreneurs are finalizing their options, the full convertibility of the rupee has come as a shot in their arm. Singapore businessmen, who are too shrewd in counting the last cent of profit are aware of the likely fall in the value of the rupee in the short run which will make their own exports to India costlier. But, traders they are. They can get imports from India cheaper for exports elsewhere. The big media splash of the Indian budget focuses attention on the big cut in excise and import duties, all pointing to a good environment for production facilities. While the Indian rupee is freely traded in Singapore at about seven to eight percent above the official rate, businessmen who are planning to set up industrial ventures wanted the rupee to be convertible at the Indian end so that imports, and exports could be carried on without any hassle.

People of Indian origin in Singapore and other Singaporeans going on holiday or business visits were using the local money changers for getting Indian rupees at a more convenient term and for making remittances to their kith and kin in India. Now, they feel they can transfer the money through NRI [Nonresident Indian] accounts or encash the dollar in India at market rate without any risk. The Indian banks are awaiting the Reserve Bank rates after the float to announce a more attractive term for transferring money to India.

'Deficiencies' in Army's Preparedness Noted

BK2602045293 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 16 Feb 93 p 9

[By Pravin Sawhney]

[Text] New Delhi—If meaningful modernisation of the Army is not taken-up on war-footing, there are reasons to believe that the 1.1 million force with antiquated weapons may remain just about fit for internal security duties. This shocking in-house assessment was recently made by an Army top brass team.

And reasons for this gloomy picture are evident. Years of frozen defence budget has stymied perspective planning, scuttled wholesome modernisation and created enormous deficiencies with little prospects of a roll-back. To add to the grim hope is the widening row between the services and bureaucracy, fudged financial allocations in the published defence budget and a non-committal political direction. "While the world debates the growing Indian prowess of missiles and regional out-of-area capabilities, the services itself are most unsure," observed a senior officer.

Consider the facts regarding growing deficiencies in the Army. Working on a 80 per cent combat availability, there is shortage of over 18,000 crore worth of equipment. This is more than the entire 1992-93 defence budget of Rs [rupees] 17,500 crore. There is a critical shortage in certain specialised categories of ammunition, like armour-piercing-fin-stabilising-discarding-sabot, 155 mm calibre projectiles, extended range mortor ammunition and special small arms calibre munitions. In these categories, the Army may not be able to sustain an intense war beyond 3.5 days. There is also a grave shortfall in certain types of mines.

The vehicles needed for war mobilisation have shortages worth over 26,000 numbers. Because of no vehicle policy, the state controlled Director General Ordnance Factories (DGOF) produces 8,000 vehicles each year, of which 4,000 manufactured Shaktiman vehicles have long been declared useless by the service. There are "works" deficiencies as well estimated at over Rs 9,000 crore, with an annual allocation of only Rs 400 crore provided in the budget. "Works" include both troops and equipment accommodation. The latter is critical given the lack of authorised equipment sheds and a traditional Army distaste for maintenance, the wear and tear on sophisticated and expensive armament is enormous.

The daily maintenance of 35 divisions (each having about 13,000 troops) and numerous static formations equipment and all those spares which cost either more than Rs 2 lakh or have a life more than seven years, are required to be catered by the "maintenance budget". This includes nearly Rs 3 crore spent daily on the Siachen operations.

And the 1992-93 Army maintenance budget was Rs 3188.89 crore, of which Rs 1,600 crore were given to the DGOF, which is capacity-based and not product based state owned Organisation. This implies that while the Army for the same money gets less equipment each year (because of inflation and depleting forex), the DGOF has been maintaining its ever increasing idle capacity and over-staffed manpower.

Modernisation, for which Rs 1219.61 were allocated in 1992-93, consists of upgradations and weapon acquisitions. Also included in this money are the contractual obligations of previously purchased imported equipment in forex, usually accounting for about 30 per cent of the mentioned capital outlay.

In as far as upgradations are concerned, little has been done in the last four years for lack of finances. Conversion of Vijayanta tank formations to the T-72 tank are way behind schedule, resulting in, at least, 14 holding formations operating with defect prone Vijayantas, which itself are wearing-off by the day. While the Avadi T-72 tank factory has a capacity to manufacture 400 tanks every year, the Army does not have finances to purchase more than 40 tanks annually. There are no thermal imagers (required to operate at night and under inclement weather) for the tanks and most fire control systems of the 1,400 T-54/55 tanks require urgent upgradations.

The air defence guns are archaic. L/70 AD guns require immediate replacements. There is an urgent need for 300 indigenously manufactured flycatcher radars, each costing Rs 7 crore. And the Army cannot pay for more than 6 radars every year. Russian Tanguskhas costing Rs 7 crore each have been sought as replacements for the antiquated Shilka anti-aircraft guns. These and certain critical air defence missiles wait replacement for lack of funds. There is also a dire need for medium range battle field surveillance radars to optimally utilise Prithvi battle-field support missiles.

The cost of each Prithvi missile is Rs 1. 7 crore and the third generation fire and forget antitank missile Nag will cost Rs 60 lakh each. With each corps scheduled to have a four missile launcher unit, the moot question is how many missiles can the Army afford.

Even before Prithvi is inducted into the service, there is a requirement for an integrated battle-field command, control, communication and intelligence systems to optimally utilise the Prithvi-150 version scheduled for the Army and 250 version for the Air Force. Also needed are target acquisition means, real time communications link-up and damage assessment means, which Army does not have.

Perspective planning, both short and long term, has remained defunct. The seventh and eighth defence plan which were prepared and got the government clearance, have remained still-born for want of finances. While former Army chief Gen Sundarji's defence perspective plan-2000 AD was far-fetched and divorced both from

the sub- continental ground realities and financial constrains, legitimate requirements to even match the western adversary have been denied since the freezing of the budget at Rs 13,000 crore in 1989-90. A worthwhile Army aviation corps, self-propelled guns, artillery divisions, air defence command, more mechanisation and its support infrastructure (Pakistan has built all these assets) and a dedicated defence satellite are some issues requiring urgent attention, if the Army is to fight a modern day war, according to the Army assessment.

Each year since 1989, the Government has frozen the budget, and has resorted to supplementary demand to cater even for the sheer pay and allowances for the troops. The answer, therefore, does not lie so much in tightening in-house belt, which was accomplished by October 1992 with the implementation of the major recommendations of the Narsimhan Committee report instituted to streamline the Army structural imbalances. The answer rests with the Government. Either cut down. the present strength of 35 divisions by nearly 10 divisions, with the military direction derived from the political proviso that the Chinese threat has reduced. Or increase the budget. What needs to be remembered is that "peacetime preparedness is war-time capability," as suggested in the assessment.

Government Denies Charge of 'Inaction,' 'Drift'

BK0103162893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Congress-I has rebutted the opposition propaganda that the Narasimha Rao government is a government of drift or indecision. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newspersons in New Delhi today that the prime minister likes to consult maximum number of people before taking any decision. He said a well- considered decision is far better than an impulsive reaction.

Mr. Gadgil said the able handling of the Punjab situation; the successful visits of the British prime minister, the Russian president, and the German chancellor; and the firm handling of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rally in New Delhi give a lie to the propaganda by some opposition parties that there is inaction or delayed action by the government.

Joint Defense Production Discussed With UK

'Specific' Items Identified

BK2702081493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] India and Britain have identified certain specific items in the area of defense for joint production in the country. This follows discussions between the visiting high-level British Defense Industry Mission and the defense minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, in New Delhi. The mission also visited the defense production units in Bangalore and Hyderabad to work out joint production and marketing arrangements.

Joint Radar Company

BK2702163493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] A joint company is to be set up in India for manufacturing and marketing Cymbeline (?mortar)-locating radar worldwide. An agreement to this effect was signed by the Bharat Electricals Limited—BEL—and the United Kingdom-based Thorn EMI Electronics in Bangalore recently.

Disarmament Discussed With French Delegation

BK2702082293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Official-level discussions were held in New Delhi yesterday between India and France on matters relating to disarmament. The two sides also considered international securities issue. The French team was led by senior foreign official, Mr. (Philippe Serbov) and the Indian side was led by Mr. H.K. Singh, joint secretary [in the External Affairs Ministry], west.

Brazilian Delegation Meets President, Others

BK2702153793 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 26 Feb 93

[Text] A 15-member Brazialian parliamentary delegation called on the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] today. During the meeting, the delegation expressed appreciation of India's technological progress. The role of the two countries in the G-15 movement was also discussed.

The delegation later called on the vice president, Mr. K.R. Narayanan. They discussed parliamentary procedures in their respective countries.

The Brazilian delegation also held a meeting with some members of parliament. The delegation shared the Indian view on the need to increase the permanent membership of the UN Security Coucil. A banquet was hosted in honor of the visiting Brazilian parliamentarians. The deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr. S. Mallikarjunaiah, was present on the occasion among other dignitaries.

PRC Scientists Visit Atomic Research Center

BK0103052093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0435 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] China has shown keen interest in India's research and development efforts in making use of thorium in its future nuclear program. Two Chinese scientists are currently in Bombay to discuss with their Indian counterparts at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, BARC, about the utilization of thorium in the nuclear program. Official sources in Bombay said the Shanghai-based

Chinese scientists have been here for the past two days and will continue their discussions today also.

Russia's Yeltsin Sends Message to President

BK0103125093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The Russian President Mr. Boris Yeltsin has said that his recent talks in Delhi have raised the Indian-Russian relations to a qualitatively new level. In a message to the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, he expressed deep gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him during his visit.

Arbitration for Foreign Trade Disputes Urged

BK2702120893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] The commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, has stressed the need for an efficient and impartial machinery in the country for settlement of international business disputes through arbitration. Inaugurating the annual general meeting of the Indian Council of Arbitration, ICA, in New Delhi today, he said a dependable and sophisticated arbitration system plays an important role in promoting exports. He said apart from quick settlement, it is also important to narrow down the area of business disputes as the recurrence of disputes itself (?tends) to destroy the business environment and tarnishes the image of the trade as well as the country. For this purpose, Mr. Mukherjee said it is necessary that exporters give due attention to proper drafting of the international trade contracts.

Visakhapatnam Steel Exports Increase

BK2802091693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh earned foreign exchange worth 155 crore rupees by exporting over 200,000 tonnes of steel products during the last seven months. Talking to newsmen in Visakhapatnam, the executive director of the plant, Mr. Raju, said 75 percent of exports were to China and the remaining to Vietnam, South Korea, and Malaysia. He said export orders for 171,000 tonnes of steel products valued at 142 lakh rupees have already been booked.

1992-93 Tea Exports 'Severely' Short of Target

BK0103023293 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 20 Feb 93 p 13

[Text] Calcutta—The world's largest tea producer India has severely fallen short of the export target for 1992-93 both in value and volume terms.

According to an industry estimate, India's export performance for the current fiscal year, ending on March 3 stand at 172 million kg or so valued at Rs [rupees] 1025 crore. By contrast, the performance was 200 odd million kg in 1991-92, pegged at Rs 1132 crore. The Tea Board, however, declines to comment on the 1992-93 performance, because the fiscal year still has a month to run out.

India's 1992 tea production, the figures for which have just come in, stands it 70 odd million kg, short of the targetted 740 million kg. The deficit, according to the industry, can be attributed to adverse climatic conditions as well as conscious decision to trim production in the light of the shifts in the export markets.

It is well known that the Indian producer and exporter finds himself in a squeeze following the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a captive overseas buyer. But what is relatively less known is many tea producers' conscious decision to break on crop out turn without causing any major hiccup in the domestic market. From their point of view, it would have been unwise to be saddled with huge exportable surplus now that the captive buyer was gone fo good.

One of the 1992-93's performance highpoints is India's tremendous penetration in the UK market where Kenya would normally call the shots. India's export to the UK in 1992-93 would be in the region of 35 million kg against an estimated 24 million kg in 1991-92. The current fiscal year has seen a greater unit value realisation at about Rs 60 a kg, against Rs 57 the last fiscal. The rupee devaluation has been the prime factor for higher value realisation.

Similarly Poland, a former basket case in the erstwhile socialist Eastern Europe, has emerged as a strong market for India. An estimated 7.4 million kgs went to Poland during 1992-93, as against 3.5 million kg in 1991-92. Germany (3.5 m kg) Iran (4.4 m kg) too intensified their buying from India during the period.

There is a strong feeling that India will have to cope with stronger responses from the East European nations whose buying programmes till the other day were controlled by the former Soviet Umon.

Minister on Economic Ties With ASEAN

BK0103080893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The government today informed the Rajya Sabha that there is no proposal for India to join a regional trading block. The commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherji, said there is no proposal also for the country to seek membership of the ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations]. He however said both India and ASEAN have decided upon establishing a sectoral bilateral relationship covering such areas as trading, investment, and tourism. The aim is to promote trade and economic exchanges between the two sides within the multilateral trading system established under GATT.

ISRO Launches 2 High Altitude Rockets 19 Feb

BK0203030093 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 21 Feb 93 p 12

[Text] Bangalore—The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), as part of a unique experimental campaign, on Friday, launched successfully two high altitude Rohini-560 sounding rockets from the Sriharikota range.

An ISRO press release issued here on Saturday said the rockets mainly carried the barium release and mass spectrometer payloads. The first rocket was launched at 6.45 pm. The second followed 29 minutes later.

The main objective of this scientific experiment was to study the mechanism of vertical movement of ionisation and its role in generating plasma irregularities which are associated with the spread-F phenomenon.

Radar System for Akash Missile Reported

BK0203064493 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Indian scientists have also achieved a major success in developing the radar system of the surface-to-surface missile Akash [sky]. According to the scientific advisor to the defense minister, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam this phased army radar can track over 100 targets at a time. Dr. Kalam said the Defense Ministry has identified several critical areas for future development of its missile program. Dr. Kalam said in New Delhi that the surface-to- surface missile Prithvi [earth] is almost ready for production.

Mass Production of MBT Arjun To Begin

BK0203095093 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Mass production of the indigenously built Main Battle Tank [MBT] Arjun will be taken up during the first half of this year. This was disclosed by the defense minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, who witnessed a firepower demonstration of the tank yesterday. A report:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] The Indian Army's world class main battle tank Arjun has been successfully tested. Designed to meet the tough operational requirements of the Army, Arjun is rated to be one of the best state-of-the-art tanks in the world. The defense minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, the minister of state for defense, Mr. M. Mallikarjun, and a group of MP's witnessed the performance and action of the battle tank in the western sector yesterday. The Arjun performed extremely well in agility, maneuverability, and accurate firepower. Its 120 mm rifle gun demonstrated its prowess in all modes of fire, surface-to- surface, surface-to-mobile, mobile-to-surface, and mobile-to-mobile targets. The trial included (?tractability) in tough terrain and over obstacles. For the composite team of professionals from DRDO [Defense Research and Development Organization] and the Army, it was a red-letter day. The Army has already assessed and approved its mobility and firepower. MBT Arjun was designed at the Combat Vehicle Research and Development Establishment and the tank built at the Heavy Vehicles Factory, both in Avadhi near Madras.

Later, talking to Doordarshan, Mr. Pawar said development of Arjun reaffirms the country's faith in its technology. He said 240 crore rupees have already been spent on the development of this tank. It would go into mass production in due course, depending on the requirement of the Army and the availability of funds. [end recording]

Iran

Peterle, Official Slovene Delegation Meet Leaders

Meeting With Velayati

LD0103174693 Tehran IRNA in English 1705 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Foreign Minister of Slovenia Lojze Peterle in a meeting here Monday [1 March] with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati called for a final solution to the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina. He expressed fear that in the event the problem is not solved soon in that republic it would involve other republics elsewhere in Europe.

The Slovenian foreign minister observed that if safe corridors be created in Bosnia war refugees would be able to return home. He called on the Islamic Republic to offer help for that purpose.

The foreign minister of Iran noted in response that at the outset of the clashes in Bosnia-Hercegovina Iran had raised the topic at the United Nations and also at the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Velayati said in the beginning the world governments did not wish to pressure the Serbs, but that many governments had now concluded that they should do so. For that reason, he said, every day the political siege by other nations against the Serbs becomes tighter.

In their meeting in Tehran Velayati and the foreign minister of Slovenia also reviewed the situation in other republics of the former Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the foreign minister of Slovenia expressed the interest of his government to open an embassy in Tehran which was welcomed by the Iranian foreign minister.

Peterle arrived in Tehran Monday morning heading a political and economic delegation from his country.

Slovenia is a newly independent republic carved out of the former Yougoslavia in the Balkans.

Talks With Majlis Speaker

LD0103203693 Tehran IRNA in English 1726 GMT 1 Mar 93

["Nateq-Nuri Calls for End to Mass Killing of Bosnian Muslims"—IRNA headline]

[Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Majlis speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri here today called for Slovenia-Iran cooperation through international forums to put an end to the mass killing of Bosnian Muslims.

In a meeting with the visiting Slovenian foreign minister, Lojze Peterle, the speaker criticized the double-standards of international forums and super powers concerning the dilemma of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

The Slovenian foreign minister thanked Iran for being the first country recognizing Slovenia. On the plight of Muslims in Bosnia, he said that 70,000 Bosnian refugees have been given shelter in Slovenia.

Nateq-Nuri asked Peterle to extend an invitation to his Slovenian counterpart to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Peterle heading a delegation arrived in Tehran on Monday for a three-day visit.

President Receives Peterle

LD0203114593 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani met with Mr. Lojze Peterle, the Slovene foreign minister, this morning. In the meeting, the president expressed pleasure about the fact that Slovenia had gained independence and said that he hoped the period of transition to independence in that country will be successful.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani spoke of the need for close cooperation between the countries of the Balkan region to put an end to Serbian aggression. He added: The continuation of Serbian aggression will be detrimental to all the countries of that region and if the problem of aggression in the Balkans is not dealt with at its root, the scope of the aggression and regional wars may increase in the future. The president concluded by saying that the potential for expanding cooperation between Iran and Balkan countries, especially Slovenia, is very favorable.

In the meeting, which was also attended by Foreign Minister Velayati, Mr. Lojze Peterle first thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its friendly relations with Slovenia and for its recognition of Slovenian independence, and he said that the purpose of his trip to Iran was to strengthen ties and cooperation with our country. He conveyed the regards and friendship of the people and officials of the Republic of Slovenia for the people of Iran. He added: With a 1,000 year history, Iran is a cultured and trustworthy country and we wish your country success, peace, and advancement.

The Slovenian foreign minister described his talks with our country's officials as constructive and practical and, referring to events in Bosnia-Hercegovina, said: The Republic of Slovenia has done its utmost to prevent fighting in that region and it has supported the Muslim people of Bosnia-Hercegovina, because we believe the Muslim people of Bosnia-Hercegovina are peace-loving people. Mr. Lojze Peterle concluded by assuring our president that his country will continue its international efforts to end the fighting in that region.

Oil Minister Comments on Oil Export Cuts

LD0103105993 Tehran IRNA in English 1042 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i Monday announced Iran had cut its oil exports to 2.550 million barrel per day (b/d) within the framework of the new agreement reached by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Speaking to reporters, the minister said that March 1st was the date set by OPEC member states to put into effect the organization's decision to slash output by one million b/d.

Referring to the crude oil price hike by dlrs. 2.30 per barrel as compared to the last month, Aqazadeh-Kho'i expressed hope that oil producing countries would encourage higher prices by abiding the set quota.

He stressed that attitude of OPEC member countries during the current month would have major impacts on the oil market.

According to the minister Iran's production capacity currently stood at 4.200 million b/d, but that in a move to improve the oil market situation, Iran reduced its prodcution to 3.340 million b/d to observe OPEC quota.

Oil ministers of Qatar, Libya and Venezuela would monitor enforcement of the organization's agreement by member states, Aqazadeh noted.

He blamed the recent devastating floods in southern provinces as the main reason for recent fuel shortage in the country and said that pipelines carrying oil to Isfahan, Tehran and Tabriz refineries had been severely damaged.

Repair works had been finished and production would soon be retained, he concluded.

Nepal

Shake-Up in Police Force, Rules Changed

BK2702124493 Hong Kong AFP in English 1123 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] Kathmandu, Feb 27 (AFP)—The Nepalese Government amended Saturday the country's 1992 police service regulations in a bid to make the police service more dynamic and efficient, state radio announced.

The government retired nineteen senior police officers including the Inspector General of Police Ratna Shumshere Rana who had reached the pensionable age under the amended police regulation, the announcement said.

He was replaced by Moti Lal Bohra and two new posts, Additional Inspector Generals of Police were created under the amended regulations, an official of the Nepalese Home Ministry said.

The new regulation has provided for compulsory retirement of police personnel completing 30 years of service and has reduced the retirement age for some posts.

A highly placed army source said important changes are also likely to be enforced in the Royal Nepalese Army Service soon.

Koirala Sees No Outstanding Problems With India

BK2802160293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] The Nepalese prime minister, Mr. G.P. Koirala, has said that there were no outstanding problems with India and that the two countries have very good relations. Replying to listeners' questions in a BBC program tonight, Mr. Koirala said if any issues come up, both the countries should sit together and solve them. Referring to opposition criticism of his government over the Tanakpur Barrage agreement with India, he said it is not an issue at all and the opposition is trying to make a mountain of a mole hill. He said the agreement is being put up to appropriate forums for ratification. Our Kathmandu correspondent says the opposition in Nepal has mounted criticism in and outside parliament and wants the agreement to be redefined.

Pakistan

Reportage on Afghan Peace Talks in Islamabad

Rabbani Arrives 1 Mar

BK0103144893 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The president of Afghanistan, Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, was given a warm welcome when he arrived in Islamabad today to initiate an intra-Afghan dialogue on the prevailing situation in his country with a view to resolving the present political impasse. The president, Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and the prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, greeted the Afghan president at the airport. The speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Gauhar Ayub Khan, federal ministers, minister of state for foreign affairs, mayor of Rawalpindi, and high-ranking officials were also present at the airport.

Commenting on the visit, a spokesman for the Foreign Office told reporters that the moot of the Afghan leaders in Islamabad is in response to Pakistan's efforts. Its main objectives are to resolve differences among the Afghan leaders with a view to establishing peace in Afghanistan and evolving a consensus for setting up a broad-based government.

The president of Afghanistan, Prof. Borhanoddin Rabbani, called on the prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, in Islamabad today. The two leaders met for an hour without aides. Later, they were joined by their respective delegations. The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere.

Talks Begin

BK0103162693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, had talks with the visiting Afghan president, Borhanoddin Rabbani, in Islamabad today to discuss the current situation in Afghanistan and steps to restore peace in that country. The foreign secretary, Mr. Shaharyar M. Khan, who briefed newsmen about the talks, said the two leaders had an hour-long meeting without aides. They were then joined by their respective delegations and the talks continued after Iftari [breaking of Ramadan fast at sunset].

He said at Iftari the official Pakistan and Afghan delegations were joined by leaders of other Afghan parties, including former President Professor Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, Pir Gaylani, Mr. Mohsini, Mr. Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, and representatives of other tanzimat [organizations]. He said talks were resumed after Iftari dinner and these were in progress now. These talks are being held at ministerial level. He said Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar and Mowlawi Yunes Khales are expected to arrive in Islamabad tomorrow to take part in the talks.

The foreign secretary said the atmosphere at these talks was very constructive and positive. Pakistan expressed grief at the situation in Afghanistan. He said the prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, during the talks expressed the hope that a cease-fire would be achieved which would have permanence, and during the cease- fire differences between various factions will be resolved in a constructive and positive manner. He said that was why Pakistan invited President Rabbani and other Afghan leaders to be present in Islamabad in the hope of being able to achieve a cease-fire. Earlier, the

president of Afghanistan, on arrival in Islamabad, was received by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif at the airport.

Tehran Reports Talks

LD0203122993 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Report by unidentified correspondent from Islamabad]

[Text] The first round of joint talks between Afghan mojahedin groups began about an hour ago in the office of Pakistan's prime minister. The talks, which began yesterday, are taking place with the mediation of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Issues relating to a permanent cease-fire and ending the fighting in Kabul, the make-up of the cabinet, the possibility of transferring heavy weaponry away from Kabul and withdrawing armed groups from the capital of Afghanistan, as well as Borhanoddin Rabbani's presidency will be discussed. So far, no further details have been announced about the contents of the talks or their results.

According to the latest reports, all the leaders and representatives of Afghanistan's jihadi groups, including Borhanoddin Rabbani, Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, Karim Khalili, Pir Seyyed Gilani, Golboddin Hekmatyar, and Ayatollah Mohseni are taking part in the talks. In the meantime, the Islamic Republic of Iran's special delegation, headed by Mr. Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for Asia and Oceania, which is in Pakistan, conducted multilateral talks with some Afghan leaders and Pakistani officials today.

In the meeting between Mr. Borujerdi and the first deputy foreign minister of Pakistan, which took place this morning, the latest Afghan developments were discussed. Shahriyar Khan said that the presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran's special delegation in Pakistan will undoubtedly be very helpful and beneficial for the resolution of the differences and disputes between Afghanistan's jihadi groups. Our country's deputy foreign minister for Asia and Oceania also met with Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, the leader of Afghanistan's National Salvation Movement.

At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran's ambassador to Pakistan met with the Afghan president today. The two sides stressed the importance of unity between Afghan groups in the present circumstances and Borhanoddin Rabbani welcomed the efforts of Afghanistan's neighbors, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, to bring the viewpoints of Afghan leaders closer together. He added that he is prepared to discuss the make-up of the Afghan government with the leaders of Afghan groups.

Tehran Comments on Talks

NC0203105093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Afghan mojahedin groups have initiated fresh efforts to reach a consensus on peace in the country. The main warring parties who were involved in the latest clashes in Afghanistan are participating in the peace talks in Islamabad with the mediation of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Our correspondent Khamene'i reports from Islamabad:

[Begin Khamene'i recording] The talks to end the bloodshed and war in Kabul and to reach a solution to restore stability to this country began last night with the arrival of President Borhanoddin Rabbani in Islamabad. The talks are scheduled to resume in under an hour in the Pakistani capital and will be attended by most of the mojahedin groups that support or oppose Rabbani. Golboddin Hekmatyar, the Hezb-e Eslami leader and the most important opponent of the Afghan Government, is expected to participate.

'Alla'eddin Borujerdi, our deputy foreign minister for Asia- Oceania affairs, who was officially invited by the Pakistani Government to promote Iran-Pakistan cooperation and the solution of the Afghanistan problem, arrived in Islamabad at midnight. He emphasized that officials of Iran and Pakistan, which are Afghanistan's neighbors, share the same opinion and agree on cooperation to establish peace in Afghanistan, saying: Iran has always believed that any decisions on this issue should be made by the leaders of the Afghan mojahedin groups. We will respect their decision.

He said only a comprehensive consensus that incorporates all the parties' views will succeed. Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials said Pakistan will remain neutral in the talks with Borhanoddin Rabbani and the opposing groups, acting as an interlocutor. Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan said last night that the implementation of a permanent cease-fire and the termination of the conflict in Kabul are the most important considerations and added: These measures can be followed up by prolonged discussions among the opposing factions to solve their problems.

He continued: The opposition by Afghan groups to Borhanoddin Rabbani's reelection at last year's convention of the Resolution and Settlement Council, the appointment of Cabinet members, and the possibility of the transfer of heavy weapons to a site away from Kabul are among the various issues that should be assessed. He said he hoped a representative from Saudi Arabia and Golboddin Hekmatyar would participate in the second day of the talks. [end recording]

Minister Briefs Senate on Antarctica Expeditions

BK0203120693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] The Senate was informed today that Pakistan has sent a second expedition to Antarctica to consolidate upon the experimental work of first expedition which was launched in December 1990. The minister for science and technology, Mr. Elahi Bux Sumroo, while replying to a question by Syed Ishtiaq Azhar, said a number of experiments were carried out and an automatic observatory Jinnah Research Station was established in 1990. He said the second expedition was launched to demonstrate our continued interest in polar research which is necessary for membership of the Consultation Party of Antarctic Treaty System and Scientific Committee of Antarctic Research.

Joint Naval Exercise Held With Turkey

BK0103154293 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 1 Mar 93

[Text] Pakistan and Turkey have begun a joint naval exercise in the eastern Mediterranean sea. The exercise, codenamed Friendship 93, will continue for a week. Two Pakistani naval ships, PNS Tabuq and PNS Zulfiqar; an offshore patrol aircraft; and several Turkish naval ships, submarines, and aircraft are taking part in this exercise. This is the third time Pakistan and Turkey have held a joint naval exercise.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Militants Killed in 24 Feb Attack

BK2702121493 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 27 Feb 93

[Text] A spokesman for the Joint Operations Command [JOC] told the national news agency LANKAPUVATH that intelligence revealed that 15 terrorists had been killed on Wednesday [24 February] night on an abortive attack on the forward defense locality of the security forces and none of them in the Mannar District. Among the 15 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists killed was their leader, (R. Chunadan). Meanwhile, two sailors were killed when a Sri Lankan Navy patrol craft was blown up by an LTTE sea mine in the Jaffna Lagoon in the early hours of yesterday. The JOC spokesman said that the Navy had earlier recovered several sea mines laid by the LTTE in the Jaffna Lagoon, but added that this one had exploded when the IPC [expansion unknown] ran into it.

The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front [EFRLF] has urged all progressive and democratic organizations as well as international human rights organizations to exert maximum pressure on the LTTE to stop criminal, barbaric, and repressive activities. This was one of the resolutions passed unanimously at the second congress of the EPRLF in Madras. The EPRLF congress had also declared that the LTTE has acted in a manner detrimental to the legitimate aspirations and rights of the Eelam Tamils and has betrayed the Tamil cause.

Army Overruns Major LTTE Base, 15 Killed

BK2802120093 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 28 Feb 93

[Text] Ten terrorists were killed when security forces overran a major LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] base at Kiran in the eastern Batticaloa district last night. A military spokesman told LANKAPUVATH news agency that soldiers had also made a large haul of LTTE logistics, including food items, during the successful raid on the base located on the edge of the Toppigala jungles. The military spokesman said one soldier was wounded in the operation.

'Heavy LTTE Losses' in Mannar Air Raids

BK0203120293 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 1047 GMT 2 Mar 93

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, 2 Mar (LANKAPUVATH)—Heavy LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] losses were reported as Sri Lanka air force pilots flying ground attack aircraft scored direct hits on two large LTTE bases on the Mannar-Jaffna Road in Sri Lanka's northwestern district of Mannar during the last 48 hours.

A military spokesman told LANKAPUVATH that the pilots of the attacking aircraft reported scoring direct hits on the heavily fortified LTTE camps Sunday [28 February] and Monday at Munampiddi and Illupadai Kadai near the coastal town of Kaliyadi, about 250 kilometres from Colombo on the Mannar-Jaffna A-32 Highway linked by a ferry.

A large number of terrorists were believed killed or wounded, while a number of their vehicles were destroyed.

Last week a terrorist attack on the forward defence locality of the Poonaryn security forces camp which the LTTE insists should be removed as a condition for its lifting of the blockade of the main Colombo-Jaffna A-9 Highway at Elephant Pass which would enable the free movement of civilian traffic, including goods. [sentence as received]

Police Arrest Associate of Sea Tigers Leader

BK0203120893 Hong Kong AFP in English 1101 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Colombo, March 2 (AFP)—Police have arrested a close associate of a top Tamil guerrilla who heads his organisation's naval unit in northern Sri Lanka, official sources here said Tuesday.

Police sources said they were questioning Gajendran after arresting him at the Colombo airport late Monday as he returned home from the south Indian city of Madras. No details were available.

Gajendran is a close associate of Soosai who is chief of the Sea Tigers squad, the naval wing of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), police sources said.

The Sea Tigers and Sri Lankan navy craft have battled frequently in the past month in the northern Jaffna lagoon which has been declared a no-go zone by the military since October.

The LTTE is fighting to set-up a separate state in the northeast for Sri Lanka's minority Tamil community who are concentrated in the region. Thousands have been killed in the independence campaign.